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Eight lectures on the
Christian Sabbath

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EIGHT

LECTURES

ON THE

CHRISTIAN SABBATH.



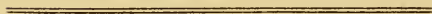
BY

WILLIAM THORN,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT PENRITH, CUMBERLAND.



Second Edition, Enlarged.



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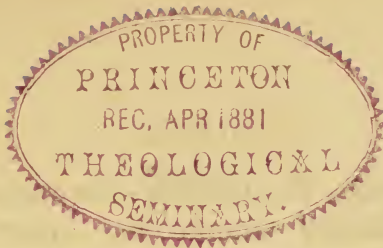
TO ALL
WHO DULY APPRECIATE THE SACRED INSTITUTION
OF THE
Christian Sabbath,
AND STRENUOUSLY ENDEAVOUR
TO PROMOTE ITS REGULAR AND DEVOUT OBSERVANCE,
THIS
SECOND EDITION OF THE FOLLOWING
LECTURES,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY & AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR
VERY OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

W. THORN.



Advertisement.

As the profits arising from the sale of the following lectures will be devoted to the erection of a new place of christian worship at Penrith, in Cumberland, where it is greatly needed, and which principally depends on the sale of this publication; it is humbly requested, that every friend of the gospel, who has it in his power, will purchase a copy; by which means he may not only benefit himself, and others around him, but will also be assisting the friends of Christ properly to execute those plans which, according to the advice of several London and country ministers, they have adopted only for the glory of God, and the good of mankind.



PREFACE.

IN presenting the following LECTURES to the christian public, it may not be deemed improper briefly to state the author's motives for publishing, and the methods he has adopted in the execution of the work.

First, His motives.---The increasing profanation of the Lord's day in almost every part of the kingdom---the request of several pious and respectable friends in London and in the country---the poverty of the christian interest at Penrith, for the benefit of which the profits will be faithfully applied---and the paucity of modern, practical, and distinct publications on the subject already before the public.

PREFACE.

Secondly, The methods.---In composing the following lectures, the writer has availed himself of all the assistance in his power, either from his friends or from books, to render them as judicious and complete as possible.---He has endeavoured to point out the ground on which the institution of the sabbath is built; feeling persuaded, that, until rules are founded on reasons, and practice is regulated by principle, the Lord's day will never be sanctified as it ought to be.---He has laboured faithfully to delineate a striking portraiture of sabbath impiety, and has so exposed it to view, that all may see its deformity, and learn the evils to which they are continually giving birth.---He has used great plainness of speech, and has frequently introduced common and colloquial expressions, and has so arranged the various parts of his discourses, that the weakest capacity might understand his meaning without much exertion of thought.---Lastly, he has introduced an unusual

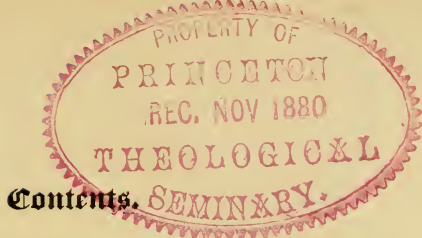
PREFACE.

number of anecdotes into the work, to make it both interesting and impressive: and, in a word, has spared neither pains nor expence to make it as acceptable and useful to the public as he was able.

With a trembling hand, he now submits it to the attention of a kind and candid public; hoping, that the youth of the writer, the purity of his object, and the disinterestedness of his motives, will serve as a mantle to cover any defects that may be discovered in this unassuming production.

And that God in his mercy may make this little work a general and a lasting blessing to the British nation and the church of Christ, is the ardent prayer of

THE AUTHOR.



LECTURE I.

The Speciality, Authority, and Sanctity of the christian sabbath.

LECTURE II.

The same subject continued.

LECTURE III.

The Profanation of the Lord's day, by the nation in general,
and by individuals in particular.

LECTURE IV.

The same subject continued.

LECTURE V.

The Non-advantage and Evil consequences of sabbath-breaking.

LECTURE VI.

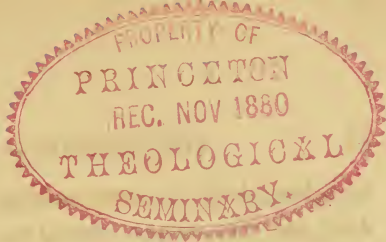
The same subject continued.

LECTURE VII.

Means and Motives for the better observance of the Lord's day.

LECTURE VIII.

The same subject continued.



LECTURE I.

THE SPECIALITY, AUTHORITY, AND SANCTITY OF
THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.



NEHEM. xiii. 15—22.

In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals, &c.



OFTEN, with great propriety, has our nation been denominated ‘The British Israel:’ there being a striking resemblance between the ancient Jews of Palestine, and the modern Christians of England. Like that peculiar people, we have been long pre-eminently blessed, and have as often abused our blessings. Like them, we have been frequently corrected for our faults, and have as continually increased our sins. Like theirs, our vices ripen for destruction; and, if some gracious blast check not their rapid growth, and make them wither on the

branches; both the tree and its fruit, like the Jew and his crimes, must, ere long, be cut down and consumed together. For why should we experience more lenity and compassion from God than the people of David, his servant, or the children of Abraham, his friend?

But there was no sin which the Israelites committed, that more provoked the Lord, or which drew down greater vengeance upon themselves, than that of sabbath-breaking. While God pardoned thefts, murders, idolatry, and almost every other species of guilt, we seldom or never read of his pardoning any notorious violation of his holy sabbaths. When these are profaned, 'he whets his glittering sword, his hand takes hold on judgment, and he makes his arrows drunk with the blood of his enemies.' For the punishment of this sin, whole lands are desolated, cities are depopulated, and Jerusalem itself is burned with fire; thousands are dragged in chains to distant regions; and those that are left at home, deprived of every comfort, sit weeping over their numerous dead, and the ashes of their favourite country.

Nor are we, as a people, at all behind the Jews in profaning that day, which God has graciously appointed for the moral improvement

of our souls, and the glory of his holy name. We need only to look around, we need only to look at home, to see, that in keeping the sabbath, as well as in most other virtues, we are far exceeded by that profligate people, whose conduct we despise, and whose sufferings we deplore. And what are the direful effects of such daring impiety? Behold them in every shape, of every magnitude, on every side! To avenge this crime, this very crime, 'the pestilence is walking in darkness, and destruction wasteth at noon-day; a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand.' Let us feel for our neighbours! let us fear for ourselves.

And what shall we do? Like Aaron of old, let us take fire from the altar of God; and, shedding on it, as incense, our tears, let us run, with our censer, between the dead and the living, that the plague may be stayed, and that we and our country may be spared the judgments of an angry and avenging God. In every station, in which, by providence, we are placed, let us use our utmost exertions to arrest, and, if possible, to annihilate, a contagion which threatens a general destruction. In order, therefore, to do what we can, and what becomes

our province, towards promoting the sanctification of the Lord's day; and, consequently, the happiness of ourselves and those around us; we will lay before you, in the best manner we are able, the claims of the christian sabbath on the attention of the christian world. In doing which, we shall observe the following order: we shall consider---

I. THE SPECIALITY, AUTHORITY, AND SANCTITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

II. THE PROFANATION OF THE LORD'S DAY, BY THE NATION IN GENERAL, AND BY INDIVIDUALS IN PARTICULAR.

III. THE NON-ADVANTAGE, AND EVIL CONSEQUENCES, OF SABBATH BREAKING.
And,

IV. THE MEANS AND MOTIVES FOR ITS BETTER OBSERVANCE.

While we are descanting on these particulars, we entreat you to pay that serious and candid attention, which your own welfare and the importance of the subject demand. And may the Lord of the sabbath be present by his

spirit, to enlighten, enliven, and otherwise to assist, the speaker; and to impress on your hearts what may be spoken according to his will.

I. We shall direct your attention to the SPECIALITY, AUTHORITY, and SANCTITY of the christian sabbath. And,

FIRST,---The SPECIALITY of the christian sabbath: in which we shall notice---

(1.) The division of time into weeks of seven days.---‘ We find from time immemorial,’ says the learned president Goguet, ‘ the use of this period among all nations, [where the dim light of nature has not been entirely extinguished,] without any variation in its form. The Israelites, Assyrians, Egyptians, Indians, Arabians, and, in a word, all nations of the east, have, in all ages, made use of a week consisting of seven days. We find the same custom among the antient Romans, Gauls, Britons, Germans, the nations of the north, and of America. The months of the antient Scandinavians were divided into weeks of seven days; a division which has prevailed among almost all the nations we have any knowledge

of, from the extremity of Asia to that of Europe.

‘Many vain conjectures have been formed, concerning the reasons and motives which determined nearly all mankind to agree in this primitive division of their time. Nothing, however, but tradition concerning the space of time employed in the formation of the world, could have given rise to this almost universal and immemorial practice.’^a ‘For the knowledge of the transactions of the creation, though much perverted, was never entirely lost among the pagan nations.’^b Thus much for the division of time into weeks of seven days each. We shall notice---

(2.) *The hallowing of a seventh-day sabbath, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ.*

FROM ADAM TO MOSES.---It has been contended,^c that when the children of Israel left the land of Egypt, either through some chronological mistake, or in order to commemorate their wonderful deliverance from the hand of Pharaoh, which, in the revolution of time, from

^a Parkhurst's Heb. Lex. in loc. ^b Enc. Brit. in loc.

^c Rev. J. Mede. Rev. Dr. Jennings. Rev. H. Jones, &c.

the creation, happened on the sixth day of the week, the day preceding their antient sabbath, the season of religious worship was moved backward twenty-four hours, and that the sixth day of the week continued to be the jewish sabbath till the resurrection of Christ, when it was again moved forward twenty-four hours, to commemorate that marvellous event, thereby bringing it a second time on the antient seventh day of the week; so that the jewish sabbath was observed on the sixth day of the week, and the patriarchal and christian sabbaths have been observed on the seventh day.

But as several powerful objections have been adduced against this position,^d and as the decision of it any way would not materially affect our present design, therefore, not to involve our subject in needless difficulties, we have taken for granted, that if there was an hebdomadal rest from Adam to Moses, it was held, as after, on the seventh day of the week.

To prove the reality of such an institution and observance, we remark,

FIRST,---*That we have several scripture intimations of it.*---It appears, then, from the

^d Vide Bapt. Mag. vol. x. p. 439.

early and incidental mention of ‘ seven days---yet seven days---other seven days---yet other seven days---fulfil her week, namely, of seven days---seven days were fulfilled---and they sat upon the ground seven days’^e ---principally alluding to acts of religion; that the sabbath was never totally neglected, or, at least, never lost sight of in the antediluvian world, throughout the patriarchal ages, nor by the Hebrews during the Egyptian captivity. It appears, also, to have been ‘ the end of days,’ or, the end of labouring days, when Cain and Abel offered sacrifices, and likewise ‘ the days,’ or, the particular days, mentioned in Job, when the sons of God, or pious people, met together for religious worship.^f

The sanctification of a patriarchal sabbath will be further manifest, if we consider that in those early ages the people had their appointed places of public worship;^g that they exercised themselves in social and public devotion;^h that they had their respective ministers of reli-

^e Gen. i. 10. vii. 4. viii. 10. viii. 12. xxix. 27.—comp. Judges xiv. 12.—Exodus vii. 25. Job ii. 13.

^f Genesis iv. 3. *Heb.*—Job i. 6, and ii. 1. *Heb.*

^g Gen. xii. 8. comp. xiii. 3. Gen. xxviii. 19. comp. xxxv. 7.

^h Vide supra.

gion,ⁱ supported by the tithe of the public produce;^k and that certain beasts were appointed as sacrifices for the Lord.^l

Connecting these statements with those just now adduced, who can suppose that the patriarchs and their immediate progeny should have places of worship---public devotion---ministers of religion---tithes for their support---and sacrifices for God---and yet have no appointed day on which to assemble for divine service; especially when we find their progenitors sacrificing on the end of days, and their immediate posterity assembled together, and before God, on some particular day of the week, to do him homage, and to ask his blessing? And if there was a stated day, who will suppose that it occurred more or less frequently than in every week, when we find this division of time so often mentioned, in connection with religious exercises, throughout the brief narrative of the patriarchal ages.^m

ⁱ Gen. xiv. 18.—also, Gen. xli. 45. and xlvii. 22, 26. comp. Gen. xii. 18, 19. xxxix. 9.

^k Gen. xiv. 2. xxviii. 22. xlvii. 22.

^l Gen. vii. 2. viii. 2. comp. ix. 3.

^m Vide J. S.'s Doctrine of the Church of England concerning the Lord's Day.

SECONDLY.---*That we have express scripture testimony for it:---* ‘And on the SIXTHⁿ day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had made.’^o ‘Could any intelligent and unprejudiced reader of the above verses ever suppose it to be meant, that the sanctification of the seventh day did not take place till five-and-twenty hundred years afterwards, when the law was delivered on mount Sinai? Yet, such is the hypothesis of those who deny that it took place at the creation.’^p

Those who contend that the historian here speaks of the sabbath, by way of prolepsis or anticipation, would do well to consider, that, without a perfect solecism, which is seldom found in the pentateuch, he must have spoken of the first, second, and third days, by way of prolepsis too; and that as there was no sabbath till after the giving of the law, so likewise there could be no first, second, or third days till after

ⁿ LXX. ^o Gen. ii. 2, 3.

^p Vide Rev. T. Scott's Sermon on the Sabbath.

that period, which few, it is imagined, will be sufficiently weak to admit.

But in answer to this, some have asserted, 'that the third verse of the above quotation should be read as if written in a parenthesis; it being inserted by Moses in reference to the sabbath,---which was observed after the giving of the law, when he composed the history of the creation; and simply intimates, that though in his time the seventh day was sanctified to the service of God, yet that it was not so from the beginning.' But this construction will make the sense, or rather, the nonsense, as follows: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; that is to say, the very next day after finishing the work of creation: wherefore, two thousand five hundred years after that time, God blessed and sanctified the seventh day; not that seventh day on which at first he rested, but a seventh day that, in the revolution of time, fell out so long after, and which was not blessed or sanctified before.' The exposure of the fallacy must be its infallible cure.⁹

Admitting, then, that the above verses were

⁹ Vide Dr. Owen on the Sabbath.

written in reference to an act which passed at the creation, it is enquired, if they do not contain, as some imagine, the institution of the sabbath, what can possibly be meant by the phrase, 'he sanctified the seventh day?' To sanctify any thing, is to make it intrinsically better, as the souls of men; to publish its purity, as the name of God; or, to set it apart from a common to a sacred purpose, as the vessels of the sanctuary. But, as time cannot be made more holy in itself, and as a declaration of its excellence pre-supposes its purity, to bless or sanctify a day must mean, to set it apart from a common to a sacred purpose; that is to say, as a day on which works unusually holy are to be performed.

It then follows, that God set apart the seventh day, either for himself, on which to do works unusually holy; or for his creatures, whereon they should be peculiarly devout in their duty towards him. To suppose the first, is absurd; and to admit the latter, is all we contend for. And this argument is confirmed by the Saviour, who declared, 'that the sabbath was made for man.' Nor can it be supposed that a gracious God, who suits his mercies to his creatures' miseries, sanctified the first seventh day for the

benefit of mankind, and not the following, and every ensuing seventh day; seeing the sabbath was much more necessary after the fall than before it.^r

THIRDLY.---*That we have clear corroborative evidence of it.*---Before the giving of the law on Sinai, and soon after the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, the sabbath is spoken of, as being well known to the people, and its duties religiously observed. ‘Then said the Lord unto Moses, behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day; that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, to-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will

^r Vide Cornthwaite's Tracts, p. 8.

bake to-day, and seethe that which ye will seethe to-day; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.’^s Now, if the sabbath was not instituted at the creation, when, we ask, was it instituted? To reply, ‘at the encampment in Marah,’ as some have contended,^t is a fiction long ago amply exposed:^u and to say, ‘at the giving of the law,’ is not to the point; for, as above, we find it mentioned, at least, some weeks before that time.’ ‘And the incidental manner in which it is there spoken of, is a convincing proof that the Israelites were no strangers to the institution; for had it been a new one, it must have been enjoined in a positive and particular manner, and the nature of it must have been laid open and explained, otherwise

^s Exodus xvi. 4, 5. 22—26.

^t The Learned Selden and others.

^u Dr. Owen on the Sabbath.

the term 'sabbath,' would have conveyed no definite meaning whatever.^v

FOURTHLY.--*That we have collateral proof of it.*---The observance of the sabbath was not unfrequently urged, by the Almighty, as obligatory on the Jews, 'because that on this day he had rested, after creating the heavens and the earth.'^w Now, the reason of this obligation must have commenced as soon as one sabbath had been hallowed; and it must have been as much a plea for Adam's sanctifying it as for David's. It is therefore extremely improbable, that such a ground of obligation should have existed upwards of two thousand years, without having ever been pleaded, or even revealed to mankind. In fact, the peculiar manner in which this command is introduced, 'remember the sabbath day,'^y plainly intimates, that the obligation to observe it, existed, in all its force, before the delivery of this formal and explicit injunction. Nor is there any ground of such an institution discoverable, prior to the giving of the law, except what we read in the second chapter of Genesis, whereon, it appears, it really was founded.

^v Enc. Brit. in loc.

^w Exodus xx. 11. xxxi. 17.

FIFTHLY,---*It is what might have been expected.*---When we consider, that God communicated many spiritual favours to our first parents and their posterity, before the giving of the law; there being an interval of two thousand five hundred years; it seems very improbable, that he withheld from them the blessing of a sabbath for social worship; without which, many of their mercies could never have been properly enjoyed. And when, in addition to this, we reflect on the great piety of some of the antediluvians and patriarchs, from Adam to Moses, their amazing longevity; and even the natural morality of a sabbath, or of some stated time for devotion, we may reasonably suppose, that if any such day had been appointed, it was, as far as practicable, regularly and piously consecrated to religious worship.

LASTLY,---*That it has been the general sentiment of mankind.*---That the sabbath received its origin at the creation, Tertullian informs us, was a common opinion among the Jews in his day. Josephus, Philo, Manasseh Ben Israel, Maimonides, Eben Ezra, and many other celebrated Israelites, express themselves to the same effect. Abarbanel observes, ‘ that the

Almighty sanctified and separated the seventh day unto glory and honour; because on its approach the work of heaven and earth was perfected: even as a man, when he has performed an honourable work and perfected it, maketh a banquet and a day of feasting.' That it was the sentiment of the apostles, may be seen by their writings.^x A slight acquaintance with ecclesiastical history will convince you, that it was the opinion of the principal fathers of the christian church.^y It was likewise the sentiment of the greatest divines at the reformation from popery. And it is the opinion of most writers on the subject in the present day.

We will answer an objection brought against it.---It is argued, 'that, as the sabbath is not expressly said to have been hallowed from the beginning of the world till the descent of the manna, we have no sufficient reason to conclude that it was.' We reply, 'that, as one truth cannot contradict another, so no material objection can be deduced from this silence, since

^x Vide Dr. Owen on Heb. iv. 1—11.

^y Morer on the Lord's Day, p. 98.

^z Hom. Place and Time of Prayer.

we have produced probable and, to the unprejudiced mind, positive proof to the contrary. Besides, the silence of the historian, who details but a few of those things which transpired during the period of which he was writing, is no proof that the sabbath was observed all the time. He mentions the institution of it, and then says neither that it was or was not kept, nor any thing directly about it, till a particular circumstance made it necessary; when he introduces it as a subject well known to himself and his readers.' Observe, also, that the sabbath is not spoken of, from the delivery of the law, till by David to Solomon,^a about five hundred years afterwards; during which period, all must allow, it was universally considered of divine appointment; and, as such, attended to by the israelitish nation.*

‘Circumcision, which was, without any dispute, continued all through the jewish polity, is never mentioned from the settlement of the Israelites to the circumcision of Christ; a period

^a 1 Chron. xxiii. 31.

* ‘There are but five passages in which the sabbath is mentioned in the jewish writings, from the time of Moses to the return of the captivity, one thousand years.’—*Dr. Dwight's System of Divinity*, vol. iv. p. 45.

of one thousand five hundred years: and hence the silence of history, with respect to the continuance of a rite or custom well known to have been instituted or adopted, is no argument against such continuance; provided the reason on which the institution was originally grounded, remains the same: hence it can by no means be concluded, that because there is no express mention of the observance of the sabbath in the patriarchal history, that, therefore, no sabbath was observed in those days.'^b From what has been advanced, we trust you are fully convinced, that the weekly sabbath received its origin at the creation of the world, and was, up to the time of Moses, regularly observed, or invariably esteemed, as the divinely appointed sabbath of mankind.

Should it be enquired why we have taken up so much of your time in establishing the antiquity of the sabbath, we answer, because it appeared to us of very material concern; for could it be proved that mankind had lived two thousand five hundred years, perhaps as devoutly as now, without the aid of a regular sabbath for devotion, it would tend considerably to weaken

^b Dr. Jennings's Jewish Antiq. book 3.

the authority of the institution itself, and almost entirely to nullify those natural reasons, which in our next lecture we shall adduce for its continued observance.

FROM MOSES TO CHRIST.---From the delivery of the law till the death of the Saviour, there is every reason to conclude, that the seventh day was invariably hallowed as the divinely appointed sabbath of the Hebrews; a powerful proof of which, among a thousand others, is its continuance to the present time among the Jews, who, as far as they can, ever adhere to their antient ritual and observances. But this being a truth universally admitted, it would be improper to occupy your time in attempting to establish it.

The seventh day, moreover, was always considered as sacred by the HEATHENS in general; and as such it is particularly mentioned by the Greek writers, Hesiod, Homer, Linus, and others. Josephus, in his treatise against Apion, says, ‘nor is there any city whatever, whether Greek or Barbarian, nor a single nation, whither the custom of the sabbath, on which we rest, has not passed.’ Philo, also, speaking of the seventh-day sabbath, says, ‘this is a feast, not

of one city or country, but of all.'^c This universal practice most likely arose in consequence of tradition from Noah, who delivered to his children, the fathers of the second world, all the knowledge he had obtained from experience, his progenitors, or Jehovah himself.* We shall notice---

(3.) *The change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week.*---And FIRST, we contend for it from scripture testimony.---The work of creation, by the Father, and the work of redemption, by the Son, are represented as parallel labours---' new heavens and a new earth are made---another spirit broods over the moral chaos---another sun arises on the benighted world---another fruitful enchanting paradise is planted---man is created anew---a

^c Vide Dr. Ridgely's Body of Divinity. vol. ii. p. 266.

* It may be objected, that the heathen nations observed this division in their time, in consequence of the promulgation of the mosaic history. But it may be replied, that such a division is spoken of by gentile writers of distant regions, (Hesiod, Homer and Linus) several hundred years before the writings of the sacred historian were committed to the pagan world. "The law of Moses was not known or read by the heathens, till the translation of it by the seventy elders, in the days of Ptolemy II. king of Egypt, about three hundred years before Christ."—*Dr. Wright on the Sabbath*, ch. 1. s. 5.

new law is delivered---a new sabbatical rest is observed by the Saviour---and, that men should honour the Son as they honour the Father, a new sabbath is appointed for man.'^d And that this sabbath should be held on the first day of the week, may be fairly inferred from the following details:*

It was on the first day of the week that our Saviour, abolishing death, bursting asunder the gates of the grave, and triumphing over every spiritual adversary, arose from the dead, opened a way for his followers through the regions of the tomb to the mansions of joy, and brought a glorious life and immortality to light^e;---on the first

^d Isaiah lxx. 17, 18, comp. 2 Peter iii. 13. John xvi. 7—14. Mal. iv. 2. Matt. xiii. 23. John v. 25. Romans iii. 29. Hebrews iv. 11. John v. 23. Revel. i. 10.

* It has been enquired (Cornthwaite's Tracts,) why the day of the Redeemer's birth, or the day of his death, should not have been set apart for christian worship, rather than the day when he arose from the dead? To this rather presumptuous question, several answers might be given; but we shall satisfy ourselves with the following:—a sabbath to commemorate the rest of the Saviour from the work of redemption is most analogous to the sabbath appointed to commemorate the rest of the Father from the works of creation; and in the New Testament more importance is attached to the doctrine of Christ's resurrection than to any other.—Vide *Fleming's Tracts*, p. 37.

^e 'Auspicious morn! thy blissful rays
Bright seraphs hail in songs of praise.

day of the week he appeared to Mary Magdalene and other pious women---then he discovered himself to two of his disciples in their way to Emmaus---on the same day he met with his disconsolate followers, and demonstrated to them the identity of his person---on the first day he removed the incredulity of Thomas---and on that day also he blessed his disciples, bestowed on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, and signed their commission to preach the gospel to a guilty world.^f Indeed, it is supposed, by many, that on every first day of the week, while Christ remained upon earth, after his resurrection, he met with his disciples, to communicate to them that knowledge which, as his ambassadors, they would constantly need: for, on one of those days, we find them assembled waiting his arrival, as if his coming was a matter of course.^g On this day, also, the Holy Ghost was poured out

At thy approaching dawn,
Reluctant death resigned
The glorious Prince of life,
In dark domains confined :
Th' angelic host around him bends,
And midst their shouts THE GOD ascends.'

^f Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1. comp. Luke xxiii. 44, 53. and John ii. 18, 19. Luke xxiv. 10, 13, 36—48. John xx. 19—23, 26.

^g John xx. 26.

upon the apostles and people; inspiring the former with divine knowledge, and a power to communicate it in every language; and turning the latter from foes to friends, from folly to wisdom, and from satan to God.^h On the first day of the week Paul preached at Troas, and raised the dead; where it is observable, that the apostle waited six whole days to preach on the first; and that then the people came together, not in consequence of any particular notice, but apparently from custom.ⁱ

The following remarkable events took place also on the first day of the week: 'then collections were made for the indigent saints, which was probably done, as at present, when the people met together to break bread---John was in the spirit, on what, without inventing a name, or speaking unintelligibly, he denominates the Lord's day, by which, as Ignatius, his disciple, informs us,^j he intended the first day of the week; and then were communicated to him some of the most wonderful revelations that were ever vouchsafed to the children of men.'^k Then

^h Acts ii. 1. comp. Lev. xxv. 8—13.

ⁱ Acts xx. 7.

^j Epist. ad Magnes. p. 35.

^k 1 Cor. xvi. 2. xi. 20. Rev. i. 10.

the Saviour was declared to be the Son of God with power---it was on this day that man was virtually begotten to a lively hope of everlasting life---this day was predicted as the eighth in the old testament---of this day the royal Psalmist sang---and of its glories Isaiah prophesied.¹

Augustine contends, 'that the Lord's day was presignified by the eighth day, appointed for Jewish circumcision; and that the ancient Rabbies, some of whom he cites, knew the seventh-day sabbath would be changed to the first on the establishment of the kingdom of Messiah.' Paul tells us, also, 'that the ancient sabbath, as held on the seventh day of the week, was merely a type of the Saviour; and which, as far as it was a shadow, when the substance came, was, of course, to vanish with the other types of the ceremonial dispensation.'^m

SECONDLY,—*We contend for it, from the evidence of history; of which we are furnished with abundance, and which, while it establishes the antiquity of the Lord's day, manifests the*

¹ Rom. i. 4. 1 Peter i. 3. Lev. xxiii. 31—39. Ps. cxviii. 24. comp. Acts iv. 10, 11. Isa. lvi. 2—8. also, lxvi. 23.

^m Col. ii. 16, 17. Gal. iv. 10.

attention with which it was regarded by the antient friends of Christ.

Barnabas, who flourished about the middle of the first century, says, ‘we celebrate the *eighth* [or first] day with gladness.’

Ignatius, who lived in the early part of the second century, advises every lover of Christ ‘to celebrate the *Lord’s day*, consecrated to his resurrection; and he calls it the queen and chief of all days.’

About the middle of the third century, *Origen* admonishes his people ‘to pray to God, especially on the *Lord’s day*; which, he says, is a commemoration of Christ’s passion: for the resurrection of Christ is not only celebrated once a year, but every seven days.’

About the year 300, *Athanasius* writes, ‘even as at first, it was commanded that the sabbath should be observed in memory of the creation, so do we celebrate the *Lord’s day* as a memorial of the beginning of the new creation.’

A council held at *Laodicea*, in the year 370, required christians not to judaize in keeping the sabbath; but to prefer the *Lord’s day* before it, and thereon to rest from all their labours.

In the year 470, *Leo* the Great sent out an edict to the following effect:---‘We decree the

Lord's day to be venerable ; and therefore free it from all citations, executions, pleadings, and the like ; neither let the circus nor theatre be opened, or combating with wild beasts be seen on it.'

In the year 590, a synod, held at *Auxerre*, decreed, 'that no man should be allowed to plough, or cart, or do any such thing, on the *Lord's day*.'

A general council, held at *Constantinople*, about a hundred years after, declared, 'that if any bishop, or clergyman, or any of the laity, absented himself from the church three *Lord's days* together, except in cases of urgent necessity ; if a clergyman, he was to be deposed ; and if a layman, to be excommunicated.'

About a century after this, *Charles* the Great, king of France, published the following edict :---
'We do ordain, as it is required in the law of God, that no man shall do any servile work on the *Lord's day* ; namely, that they employ not themselves in works of husbandry ; making hay, fencing or hedging, grubbing and felling trees, digging in the mines, building houses, planting orchards ; and that they go not a hunting in the fields ; or plead in courts of justice ; that women weave not, or dress cloth, do no needle-work,

or card wool, or beat hemp, or wash linen openly, or shear sheep; but that they all come to church, to magnify the Lord their God, for those good things which on this day he bestowed upon them.'

About the year 850, *Theodosius*, king of Bavaria, made a law, 'that if any person, on the *Lord's day*, yoked his oxen or drove his wain, his right side ox should be immediately forfeited; or if he made hay and carried it in, he was to be twice admonished to desist, and if he did not, he was to receive no less than fifty stripes.'

We could lengthen the list of evidence, but we will close with the following edict of the *Emperor Leo*, commonly called the Philosopher, published about the close of the ninth century. 'It is our will and pleasure,' says he, 'according to the true meaning of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles by him directed, that on the *sacred day*, on which we were restored to our integrity, all men should cease from labour: neither the husbandman, nor others, putting their hands to prohibited work. For if the Jews did so much reverence the shadow, ought not we to honour the substance? I mean the day which the Lord honoured, by rescuing us from

the captivity of death. Are not we bound to keep it inviolably, and to be contented with the liberal grant we have of all the rest, without encroaching on this one, which he has named for his service?"^a

THIRDLY,---*We contend for it for several reasons.*---When the change of the day took place, whether gradually or at once, it must have been well known to the public; and if it had not been considered of divine appointment, would have been immediately opposed by every friend and foe of the Saviour; and especially by the converted Jews, who, it appears, were uncommonly attached to their old times and modes of worship. But as it was never called in question by any of the antients, the use of the first day, now, is an irrefragable evidence of its antiquity, and consequently of its divine appointment.

It may be also remarked, that 'if the institution of the antient sabbath be yet in force, because there was an express command for keeping it, then the manner of keeping must be in force also, because the manner of keeping was

^a Vide Morer on the Lord's Day, Dial. 3, also, the Rt. Hon. Lord King's Hist. of the First Three Centuries.

as much the subject of an express command from God as the sabbath itself was; but the law of keeping is no more expressly abrogated by the gospel than the law of the sabbath; therefore both must be yet a law of the sabbath,^o unless both are abrogated by the gospel---sabbatarians necessarily concede the one, and we as legally claim the other.

It is likewise worthy of consideration, that the change of the day does in no wise affect either the spirit or the letter of the fourth commandment. The design of this institution was evidently and only to appoint a seventh portion of our time, on which to commemorate the works of creation, and to make our peace with God; for which the seventh day has no more inherent adaptation than any other. Nor does the language of the fourth commandment bind us to observe any one specific day of the week. It says, 'the seventh day is the sabbath;' but then it does not determine whether the first, second, or third day may not be the seventh;*

^o Fleming's Letter to Cornthwaite, p. 37.

* 'The tithe or tenth of the land is the Lord's. (Lev. xxvii. 30.) Here it is not necessary to devote to the Lord the tenth *in order*, but any one part of the ten; so the seventh day mentioned in the fourth commandment does not necessarily signify the seventh

nor does it say whether this seventh day is to be reckoned from the creation, or the deluge, or the coming out of Egypt, or the falling of the manna, or after six days of labour;^p nor does it command us to remember the seventh day, but the sabbath; and he blessed the sabbath day, and not the seventh, on which it was to be observed. 'The sabbath, being a thing entirely distinct from the day on which it is kept, may be a perpetual institution, and yet be kept, if God should so order it, on any, or successively, on all the days of the week.'^q

Again; if the alteration of the sabbath was not according to the will of God, it would have been only in agreement with his general procedure, that he should by some means have told his worshippers of it; but this, it appears, was never the case: God saw that the people were about to change it, and he said nothing to prevent it; it was changed, and he has since been equally silent respecting it, which is another strong proof, if not of the divine

in order, but may signify a seventh day, or any one day in seven.—Vide *Cawdry and Palmer on the Sabbath*, vol. ii. p. 260.

^p Wright on the Lord's Day, ch. 1. s. 3. also, ch. 2. s. 3.

^q Dwight's Sermons, vol. iv. p. 17.

appointment, yet of the divine approval, which nearly amounts to the same thing.

But to carry the argument still further; God has been blessing the first day of the week as a means for the conversion and happiness of mankind, and totally neglecting the antient seventh-day sabbath. Now, if God did not abrogate the latter, and institute the former in its place, then has he neglected a positive and important institution of his own, and has been blessing a human device, for the support and extension of his spiritual kingdom.^r

‘ This change moreover must have been appointed by human or divine authority; by human authority it could not, for there was no general council in the first ages that met to alter it, and hence it must have been of divine original.’^s

Nor can we discover any thing in this alteration that can, in the smallest degree, derogate from the honour of Him, who is sole Lord of the sabbath; and who changes the times and the seasons according to his pleasure, for the advancement of his glory, and the promotion of piety in the world.^t

^r Vide Dr. Dwight, vol. iv. p. 31.

^s Enc. Brit.

^t Luke iv. Dan. ii. 21.

LASTLY.---*We contend for it against objections*---It is urged, first, 'that there is no express or positive precept in the new testament for keeping the first day of the week, and that therefore its observance is not obligatory on us.' We reply, 'that this ground of objection is rather untenable.'" However, an express or positive precept is not necessary. If it can be clearly shewn to have been the practice of the first christians, or, in other words, that it was a custom, (and custom in these matters was considered a law,^x) when christianity was least encumbered with human inventions, and when the mind of its founder could not be easily misunderstood; for people to hallow the first day of the week instead of the seventh, the point at issue is determined; for men may be divinely influenced to do the will of God as well as to say it; and we are justifiable in copying a good man's example, as much as in obeying his commands.'^y

Besides, we have no precept in the new testament for keeping the seventh day; nor is there any proof that the apostles particularly

^u Acts xx. 7 comp. Heb. x. 25.

^x 1 Cor. xi. 16.

^y Ex. xiii. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

observed it, but only that some of them then embraced the favourable opportunity of preaching the gospel to the antichristian or partially converted Israelites. And if the practice of keeping the first day of the week be as antient as the time of the apostles, as few will deny, it is more than probable, that it commenced in obedience to their command; as, like Moses, they were invested with proper authority to settle the affairs of the church. And if it was ordered by them, it originated with the Saviour; as they positively tell us, ‘that they delivered nothing to others but what they received from him.’^z And hence *Athanasius* justly observes, ‘that the Lord himself changed the day:’ no person, or body of people, having authority to alter the time of religious worship, or to institute a binding festival, any more than to renew circumcision and sacrifices, with any and every other jewish and even heathenish observance’^a

It is contended moreover, ‘that from the subjugated state of the primitive christians, the Lord’s day could not be sanctified generally to the service of God; and that the arguments adduced in support of the change of the sabbath,

^z Matt. xviii. 18. 1 Cor. xi. 23. ^a Kings xii. 23.

drawn from the practice of the first believers, are not at all conclusive.' In reply, we remark, 'that this objection is founded on the supposition, that the antient church was composed only of people in a menial capacity, which can by no means be established, being fully contradicted by the express testimony of the new testament, and the authentic history of the first ages after Christ.^b Besides, if some of the first professors of the gospel were so situated as to be unable publicly to hallow the Lord's day, it does not argue that this time was not universally esteemed sacred to devotion, and that in sufferable circumstances it would not have been devoted to the service of God.'

It is further objected, that 'the first believers attended on religious worship early on the Lord's day morning, and late in the evening, and followed their worldly employments during the rest of the day, and that therefore we are not bound to keep it in any other way.' But admitting the ground of this objection, still it is evident that the first christians must have

^b Vide John iii. 1, 2. xix 33. Acts x. 1. xvii. 4. et passim ; also, Mosheim and Mith.er's Histories of the First and Second Centuries.

observed the sabbath in this manner, through either choice or necessity. If it were through choice merely, then they must have considered this either not the proper day for divine worship, or that a part of it only was to be observed; if it were not considered the right day, then they need not observe it at all, and the objection falls to the ground. But if they considered it the true sabbath, and that a part of it only was to be sanctified, they acted on principles in direct contradiction to the commandment of God, and on which we shall have to animadvert in the following lecture. But if the early christians attended their usual avocations through necessity, it is no more than many do in the present day, and which can by no means invalidate the authority of the christian sabbath.

But it is objected, finally, that ‘the primitive believers observed both the jewish and christian sabbaths;^c and that therefore they could not be fully instructed to observe the first day of the week, which would have been the case had the alteration originated in the commandment of God.’ We answer, that this objection is quite irrelevant. It admits that while the converted

^c Hall's Enc. on the word Sunday.

Jews had a respect for the seventh day of the week, as commemorating the close of creation, and the deliverance of their forefathers from bondage, at the same time they had an equal respect for the first, as a memorial of their redemption by the Son of God. Their reasons for observing the seventh day do not affect the ground of their sanctifying the first. It is evident that they were fully persuaded of the divine appointment of the latter,^d though their prejudices would not suffer them totally and at once to disregard the former.^e But as neither the law nor the gospel commands us to consecrate two whole days in seven to the exercises of devotion, we naturally conclude, that the appointment of the first day of the week for public worship, is a perfect abrogation of the seventh.

Other objections have been advanced against the alteration of the sabbath, but they are too weak to require an answer, and their authors too obscure to demand it.

^d Otherwise they would not have observed it.

^e Vide Dr. Dwight's System of Divinity, vol. iv. p. 53.

HYMN.

“ This is the day the Lord has made,
He calls the hours his own ;
Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.

To-day he rose and left the dead,
And satan's empire fell ;
To-day the saints his triumphs spread,
And all his wonders tell.

Hosanna to the anointed King
Of David's holy Son ;
Help us, O Lord ! descend and bring
Salvation from thy throne.

Bless'd be the Lord, who comes to men
With messages of grace—
Who comes in God the Father's name
To save our sinful race.

Hosanna in the highest strains
The church on earth can raise ;
The highest heaven in which he reigns
Shall give him nobler praise.”

WATTS.

LECTURE II.



THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IN the progress of our last lecture, we proved, it is hoped, to your satisfaction, that time has been invariably divided into weeks of seven days each; that there was a seventh-day sabbath from the creation of the world, till the resurrection of Christ; and that, on the introduction of christianity, this festival was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, as now observed by nearly all christian churches. We proceed, in the next place, to consider more at large the divine authority of the christian sabbath; after which we shall shew you how it should be observed by all professors of the christian religion.

Before we proceed, however, we wish you clearly to understand, and constantly to bear in mind, that having so fully established the

speciality of the day appointed for religious worship, that you cannot, in this respect, easily mistake our meaning; we shall, for the most part, in future, speak of the sabbath generally: considering any thing done on the antient seventh day, (if not of a typical nature) as applicable to the present first day of the week; and shall borrow any thing from it, that will either illustrate or support our different propositions.

SECONDLY.----THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH; for which we contend,

(1.) *From the majesty and conduct of God; by whom it was instituted. From the majesty of God.* In addition to any natural principles which we may possess that urge our observance of a sabbath, of which we shall presently treat, we have received plain and positive commands from Jehovah himself to keep it holy. From him who made us, whose we are, and whom we ought most promptly and cheerfully to serve; from him, whom saints and angels acknowledge as their sacred head; who can make us unspeakably happy, or render our being insupportably wretched for ever; from him, 'who does according to his will in the

army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; whose hand none can stay, or say unto him, 'what doest thou?' From this great, this glorious, this awful being, we have received injunctions to keep the sabbath day. 'The Lord spake these words and said, remember the sabbath day to keep it holy; see, because the Lord hath given you the sabbath; and says, ye shall keep my sabbaths, I am the Lord your God.'^a

From the conduct of God.---For the sabbath day, the Lord has shewn such uncommon regard, that those must be impious indeed who will not regard it also. On this day 'he rested from all the works which he had created and made,'---to-day the usual supplies of manna were withheld, a double portion being given the preceding day:^b and he has particularly honoured the sabbath, by the communication of spiritual blessings to his people.

On the sabbath, also, Jesus Christ invariably attended the temple, the synagogue, or some private abode for religious exercises---then, with

^a Ex. xx. 8. xvi. 29. Lev. xix. 3.

^b Gen. ii. 2. Ex. xvi. 27.

unusual sympathy he preached to the multitudes by which he was commonly surrounded---it was then, he wrought many of his miracles of mercy ---and then, on the mount of transfiguration, he made the most wonderful display of his personal glory that was ever beheld by mortal eyes*.^c

On the sabbath, in every age and country where the gospel has been preached, the Holy Ghost also has been more especially engaged in turning men from the paths of impiety, and in conducting them towards that rest which remaineth for the people of God ;^d all of which are particular tokens of divine regard for the sabbath, and have stamped an honour and dignity upon it.

Nor are the angels of God, and the spirits of just men made perfect, less observant of this

* Should it be objected, that as our Saviour invariably hallowed this seventh-day sabbath, and that since he has not expressly commanded us to observe any other, therefore we ought to have followed his example, and not to have altered the day ; we reply, that on this ground, as Christ was circumcised, attended the jewish synagogues, kept the passover, &c., we ought to do the same ; for he has no more expressly abrogated these than he has the antient sabbath day.

^c Luke iv. 16. Matt. xvii. 1.

^d Acts ii. 41.

sacred day. At the creation of the world, which on the sabbath we celebrate, 'the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy;'^e---in hymns of congratulation they announced the advent of Messiah,^f of whose glorious triumph this hallowed day is a bright memorial---and as on this day more than others, men are converted to God, the angels who rejoice at the repentance even of one sinner,^g enjoy an unusual pleasure, and hail its frequent return with increased delight.

(2.) *From the natural reasons of such an institution.*---That rational creatures should worship their Creator; or, that man, made for the glory of God, should formally reverence his Maker; the principles born with his being, and inseparable from his existence, whether upright or fallen, clearly inform us.^h That particular stated times should be appointed, not only for solitary, but also for social religion, in order that one man's business might not interfere with another man's devotions,* we learn from the

^e Job xxxviii. 7. ^f Luke ii. 13, 14. ^g Luke xv. 7.

^h Vide Dr. Owen on the Sabbath, Exer. Ter.

* Neither the word of God nor the laws of nature require that the sabbath should begin and end all over the world at the same moment; for then, from the rotatory motion of the globe,

general consent of mankind.* That one portion of time for divine worship is better than another, every reasonable man must allow: a month would be too long, and a minute would be too short. It is equally evident, that one space of time between the recurrence of those seasons for devotion is preferable to another; service once a year would be too seldom, and every hour would be too frequent.ⁱ

Seeing also that no created being ever possessed a power of apportioning to men the time to be employed in worshipping God; it seems reasonable, that he himself would have appointed the season, told them how long it should last, and how frequently it should recur; and all this he has done by saying, ‘six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.’^j

some would be hallowing the seventh, some the first, and some the second days of the week at once. But scripture and reason do certainly require, that all who live together in one society, or in a single nation, should celebrate their sabbath, beginning and ending at the same particular time.

* All the heathens who acknowledge a Deity have social worship.

ⁱ Vide President Edwards, Rev. J. Orton, and Dr. Wright on the Lord’s Day.

^j Exod. xx. 9, 10.

Nor does it appear why the Almighty employed six days in making the world, when he could have accomplished the work in an hour, unless it was for our imitation. And his resting and being refreshed^k on the seventh day, were doubtless for the same purpose. Nor could the heathens, to whom the traditionary accounts of creation came, ever rationally come to any other conclusion.

And the same reasons which supported a sabbath among the Jews, must uphold it among christians. We ought to worship God as well as they ; and certain appointed times for such worship are as necessary now as ever. Seeing, also, that we are freed from all other religious festivals, with which the antient dispensation abounded, and that we have more mercies to be thankful for than the people who lived in that shadowy age ; it is but reasonable that our stated periods for worship should be full as long, and return quite as often, as those before the coming of Christ. Moreover, if the sabbath was appointed for the glory of God, and the happiness of man, it is very likely that it would be handed

^k Exod. xxxi. 17.

down to us, seeing that God is equally tenacious of his glory, and man is in equal need of rest and religion.

(3.) *From the perpetual force of the fourth commandment.*---This portion of the decalogue is of a mixed nature. It is partly natural, partly moral, and partly ceremonial.* To worship God in some way at certain times, is the natural part of it; to worship him one day in seven, by a cessation from labour, with the spirit and the understanding, is its moral part; and to worship him every seventh day, as a memorial of creation and with levitical rites, is its ceremonial part.

That a part of this commandment is really natural, its eminent situation among natural principles, and our preceding remarks, will convince you. That a part of it is moral, must be admitted, since we cannot resolve the exact pro-

* The reader will perceive, that I have here employed the term *natural law*, to express that sense of duty towards God, which arises simply from the principles of our nature. For want of a better word, the phrase *moral law* is used to point out a perpetual duty, arising merely from the will of the law-giver. And the term *ceremonial law* is used to express those rites which were peculiar to the Jews under their levitical dispensation.

portion of time required of us for divine worship into any natural principles; nor can it be ceremonial, seeing that after the levitical dispensation was abolished, the apostles invariably hallowed one day in seven for the service of God. And to prove that a part of it is ceremonial, we have the authority of scripture, which calls the sabbath, enforced by this law, a shadow of something to come.¹

As far as the fourth commandment is natural, it must, for that very reason, be in force as long as man continues in his present relation to God. As far as it is moral, it can be changed only by the authority of him who made it; and as far as it is ceremonial, it must have vanished with the other shadows of the Mosaic economy.^m

Seeing, then, that the antient sabbath, as far as it was natural, must remain, and that the ceremonial part of it has long since vanished, the question is, 'what is become of the moral part?' that is to say, 'are we still bound to worship God by a cessation from labour, in spirit and in truth, one day in seven, or may

¹ Col. ii. 16, 17.—Willison on the Lord's Day, page 49. Edinburgh edition.

^m Gal. iv. 10.

it be one hour in a week, or one day in a month, or every other day, or is it left to every man's caprice to worship God when and as he pleases?' To all this it is replied, 'that any law, arising simply from the will of a sovereign, can be abrogated only by a sovereign will; and that, as God has not *publicly* repealed this law, nor told us that he requires more or less time to be employed in his service; but that, on the contrary, having declared that 'heaven and earth should pass away, before one jot or tittle of the law should in any wise fail;'^u we must conclude, that it is still in force, and that *the seventh part of our time* still belongs to God, and will be so, till he inform us of the contrary.'*

^u Matt. v. 17, 18. comp. chap. xxiv. 20.

* To hallow a seventh part of our time, as expressed above, rather than every seventh day, or one day in seven days, is most agreeable with the universal application of the fourth commandment; since, in those regions which lie near the poles, the whole year is divided not into nights and days of twelve hours each, as with us; for the inhabitants of those parts have, properly speaking, only one day and one night in the space of twelve months: and for them to interpret the commandment, and to observe it in any other sense than the above, would be to keep one sabbath in seven years, and for that to last full thirteen moons. *Vide* Bishop White on the Sabbath, p. 177.

Those who contend that all times are alike holy, and should be equally devoted to the purposes of piety,---or in other words, that every day should be a sabbath, (probably to make every sabbath as ordinary days,) in the first place, have no proof for their assertions; in the next, they are inconsistent with themselves, for they make more of the sabbath than of any other day; they oppose the real intention of the fourth commandment, which was evidently given to make a distinction between common and sacred time; they contend against the common sense of mankind; they would reduce the ten commandments to nine; produce confusion in all human affairs; abridge the glory of God, and diminish the comfort of those people who keep the sabbath of the Lord, and reverence his sanctuary.

(4.) *From the example of all good men.*--- We have worthy examples, FIRST, *In the ancient Israelites.** Among them, on this day,

* It will be observed, however, that, either in obedience to the command of God, or in compliance with the pleas of absolute necessity, the strict observance of the sabbath among the Israelites was sometimes dispensed with: as in the case of killing

peculiar rites were attended to, and extraordinary ceremonies were performed---then was there a holy convocation---Moses and the prophets were read in every synagogue---appropriate psalms were sung---prayers were offered---and the people were blessed---then, good people repaired to the prophets---and then, says one, ‘ I went with the multitude to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day’---while at the same time no meat was either baked or boiled---no ordinary work was to be done---no needless fire was to be kindled---no provisions were to be sold---no burdens were to be borne---there was to be no idle wandering through the camp---a general cessation from secular concerns was

and offering sacrifices (Num. xxviii. 9, 10.), of throwing down the walls of Jericho (Josh. vi. 2—4.), and of circumcising children, (John vii. 22, 23.)

Some of the later Jews, on the other hand, carried their observance of this day to an unpardonable excess. Their foolish traditions accumulated with years, and their rites became more superstitious, impious, and burdensome, in every succeeding age. Their pagan adversaries took advantage of their ignorance; and the Son of God himself reprobated their unauthorised practices. *Vide* 1 Maccab. ii. 32—38. Mark iii. 2—4, &c. Josephus’s Hist. Wars, b. ii. c. 8. s. 9. Jewish Antiq. b. xii. c. 6. s. 2. Eng. Enc. vol. ix. p. 159.

to take place, and all was to be holiness to the Lord.^o

SECONDLY, *In the apostles and primitive believers.*---The first followers of Christ hailed the return of this day with delight; and, though subject to the ridicule of the vain, the control of the great, and the cruelty of a furious and misguided rabble, with pleasure they commenced its sacred services. On this day they assembled for religious worship: then, they preached the gospel of Christ---administered the sacraments;---entered into the spirit of religion---and often continued their devotions a considerable time: they also made collections for the poor, and healed the wounded; and many other pious works, in connexion with these, must they have done, which are not written in this book.^p

Nor were the primitive believers less attentive to this hebdomadal rest. As an example, it is expressly recorded, that the pious women,

^o Num. xxviii. 9, 10, 25. Acts xiii. 27. Ps. xcii. *title*.
2 Kings iv. 23. Ps. xlii. 4. Exod. xvi. 23, 29. xxxv. 3.
Neh. x. 31. Jer. xvii. 21.

^p Acts xx. 7—12. Rev. i. 10. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
Acts xx. 10.

who followed the body of Christ to the sepulchre, deferred anointing it for more than a day, that they might not appear to profane the sabbath by doing it then.⁴

THIRDLY, *In the antient churches.*---Justin Martyr, who flourished about the middle of the second century, says, that ‘on this day, which heathens call ‘Sunday,’ all who live in cities and villages meet together in the same place, where the writings of the apostles and prophets are read: and we all assemble, it being the day when God finished the work of creation, and Jesus Christ our Saviour arose from the dead.’

The younger Pliny, who flourished near the end of the first century, tells the emperor Trajan, ‘that the christians of his time were accustomed to meet on a *stated day* before it was light, and, by turns, to sing a hymn to Christ as to God; to bind themselves by an oath not to do any wickedness, nor to break their word, nor to deny their pledge: all of which was concluded by what he terms a

⁴ Luke xxiii. 56.

harmless meal, meaning either their feast of charity, or the sacrament of the Lord's supper.*

The venerable Bede, speaking of bishop Tuda, says, 'that in his time, on the sabbath, the people flocked together by multitudes, in the church or monastery, not to refresh their bodies, but to learn the word of God. And if a preacher happened to come into any village, the people presently assembled, and anxiously sought from him the word of life.' And in the third century, when persecution raged so much against the church, it is well known that christians distinguished themselves by observing devoutly the Lord's day; and which all men considered a badge of christianity.

(5.) *From the designs of its appointment.*

---And, FIRST, *The sabbath was appointed*

* 'A virtuous race, to godliness devote.—

With them each day was holy; every hour
They stood prepared to die, a people doomed
To death;—old men, and youths, and simple maids,
With them each day was holy; but the morn
On which the angel said, *See where the Lord*
Was laid, joyous arose; to die that day,
Was bliss.'

GRAHAME'S *Sab.*

for the glory of God.^r The antediluvian, patriarchal, and jewish sabbaths, commemorated the marvellous exploits of creation and providence.^s It brought to mind a series of events, the remembrance of which aroused the admiration, excited the affections, and inspired the song, of many an illustrious Jew ; and which still awakens the astonishment, warms the heart, and tunes the lyre of every pious and contemplative mind.

The christian sabbath was ordained to celebrate the signal and glorious triumph of the Son of God over satan, sin, and the grave ; to be an eternal memorial of the Spirit's descent ; and to call our attention regularly to the various pleasing, pious, and improving ordinances of the christian church. ' This is the day which the Lord hath made, whereon to be exalted among the people, and glorified by all his works. Praise ye the Lord.'

SECONDLY, *The sabbath was appointed for the good of mankind.*^t

^r Isaiah lviii. 13.

^s Ex. xx. 11. and Deut. v. 15.

^t Mark ii. 27.

FOR HIS TEMPORAL WELFARE.*---*For the rest of the body.*---It is ordained in the fourth commandment, that, during six days, men shall be diligent in their business, in order to provide for themselves and their families. Now, as labour naturally wearies the man and wears out his constitution, God has, in the same commandment, mercifully counteracted the evil, by appointing every seventh day for recruiting his strength, and reanimating his spirits, for his next week's engagements. Nor is this rest to be confined to man, but is also to be afforded to the beasts of draught and burden; since they are exhausted with too much exercise as well as ourselves.^u

For domestic happiness.---The man, who, by his particular calling, is separated from his friends during the week, now returns to the bosom of his family, to enjoy the pleasures of

* 'Is not this the *sabbath*, that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?' Isaiah lviii. 6, 7. comp. v. 15.

^u Exod. xx. 10. xxiii. 12.

domestic life, and to obtain that comfort at home which the world denied him abroad.* To-day, in the well-regulated family, every thing is clean and neat; the people have little to do, but to enjoy each other's society. Every child, with its sabbath dress, puts on its sabbath looks, and sabbath deportment; and a joy pervades the good man's cottage, which makes it inviting when away, and happy when there.

For national advantage.---Judge BLACKSTONE remarks, 'that the keeping of one day in seven, holy, as a relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to a state, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes, by the help of society and conversation, the manners of the

* 'Hail, Sabbath! thee I hail, the poor man's day.
 On other days the man of toil is doomed
 To eat his joyless bread, lonely; the ground
 Both seat and board; screened from the winter's cold,
 And summer's heat, by neighbouring hedge or tree;
 But on this day, embosomed in his home,
 He shares his frugal meal with those he loves;
 With those he loves he shares his heart-felt joy
 Of giving thanks to God,—not thanks of form,
 A word and a grimace, but reverently,
 With covered face and upward eye.'

GRAHAME'S *Sabbath Day*.

lower classes, which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit; it enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness; it imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God, so necessary to make them good citizens, but yet which would be worn out and defaced by an unremitting continuance of labour, without any stated times for recalling them to the worship of their Maker.'

FOR HIS SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE.---*For public worship.*---It was an admonition of Paul to the Hebrews, 'not to forsake the assembling of themselves together:' and of those God-fearing people who often spake one to another, and, consequently, often met together about religion, 'they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'^x To enable us to comply with this admonition, and to obtain this blessing, God has appointed the seventh part of our time for social religion.

^x Heb. x. 25. Mal. iii. 17.

For the conversion of sinners.---This is the day on which thousands are reclaimed from their vices, recalled from their wanderings, and brought, in penitence and prayer, to a gracious Redeemer. At this very time, the angels of God are flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel, to preach to the nations. To-day, the towers of the mystical Babylon totter, and the peaceful kingdom of a gracious Saviour succeeds the tyrannizing domination of satan and sin.

For instructing the ignorant.---Now, the poor mechanic, whose unhappy circumstances in youth deprived him of religious education, or whose constant engagements in the week may prevent him then from making any considerable improvement, can hear the word of God, can learn to read and understand it, and may be made wise to salvation, 'through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue.'

For comforting the afflicted.---To-day, the christian who has wept all the week, is set on the rock that is higher than himself; where he 'smiles at the tempest and enjoys the storm.'

‘ Though the waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; he will not fear, for the Lord of hosts is with him, the God of Jacob is his refuge.’

For attesting our christian character.---

Every class of mankind has some characteristic feature by which it is distinguished from all other classes. The servants of God, and the worshippers of the Beast, had their respective marks in their foreheads; the Mahometans, as a badge of their religion, hallow the sixth day of the week; the Jews, as a sign of judaism, sanctify the seventh day:^y and we shall manifest our attachment to christianity by keeping the first.

To wean us from the world.---Man, by nature, is attached to the earth; almost every temporal object has a growing interest in his heart; and if no moments ever returned, when his affections were diverted from below, and set on things above, to part at last would be distressing indeed. Therefore, to make our final departure more easy, the sabbath was ap-

^y Ex. xxxi. 13, 16, 17. Ezek. xii. 20.

pointed. Then, like the new-fledged bird, we try our feeble pinions---tempt the spiritual atmosphere---gaze with indifference upon the world beneath---and find our attempts more easy every time; till at length, 'flushed for flight,' expert from experience, and attracted by heaven, 'we shall fly away and be at rest.'

As an emblem of heaven.---And were it duly observed, how appropriate the emblem would be !* As in heaven there is neither labour nor traffic, ungodly amusement nor criminal indolence; so, to-day, there would be none upon earth. As heaven is a place of religious exercise and spiritual joy, so would be our sabbaths, if properly hallowed. We should have glory below, and with pleasure anticipate the rest, or the keeping of a sabbath, that remaineth to the people of God ;^z concluding in

* No more fatigue, no more distress,
 Nor sin nor hell shall reach the place ;
 No groans to mingle with the songs,
 Which warble from immortal tongues.
 No rude alarms of raging foes ;
 No cares to break the long repose ;
 No midnight shade, no clouded sun,
 But sacred, high, eternal noon.

^z Heb. iv. 9. *Greek.*

praise what our Saviour taught us in prayer: 'Oh! Lord, thy will is done upon earth as it is done in heaven.'

If, then, such were really the designs of the Almighty, in setting apart a seventh portion of our time as a sabbath day, (and scripture and reason support our statements, surely it must appear quite inconsistent with the plans of divine providence, for God to have instituted a seventh-day sabbath *merely* for the Jews, to begin and end with their political economy; and that for two thousand five hundred years before their existence as a nation, and for ever after, the institution should have been either unknown or abolished, when the general reasons of its foundation apply alike to every people and to every age of the world.^a

THIRDLY.—THE SANCTITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.—In treating this part of our subject, we have,

(1.) A FEW THINGS TO PREMISE.—FIRST, *The scriptures afford us ample rules for the regulation of our conduct TOWARDS GOD on*

^a Vide Cornthwaite's Tracts, p. 42.

the Lord's day.---For though we have comparatively few precepts concerning the sabbath in the new testament, yet we have abundance in the old; since all the laws, rules, and regulations, respecting the sanctification of this day, found in the old testament, not of a typical nature, or peculiar to the Hebrews, in their levitical economy, but which are of a natural or moral import, are as binding on us now as they were on the Jews formerly, or as any other law contained in the decalogue, or found in the sacred volume.

SECONDLY.---*The laws of our country either do, or should, afford ample rules for the regulation of our conduct TOWARDS MAN on the Lord's day.*---God having resigned the management of that part of his earthly and temporal government, which respects our civil department, to duly elected magistrates of every nation, who are to embody his laws in their civil codes; so our English statutes either do or should contain proper rules for the regulation of our moral demeanour on the sabbath day. And these laws are, or ought to be, enforced by such penalties as should ensure their constant and due observance.

THIRDLY.---*Those rules which are given to us for the regulation of our conduct towards God and man on the Lord's day, are rather general than particular.*---In regulating divine worship among the Jews, God treated with them as an infant church; and their forms of worship being, for the most part, typical, and which must exactly correspond with their respective antitypes, their modes of worship were specified even to the posture of the body, or the motion of the finger. But now, the church having arisen to greater maturity, and our forms of worship not being typical of any thing to come, we are left to a much greater freedom in the length of our devotions, and in the modes of our worship.

FOURTHLY.---*A perfect correspondence between the modes of worship, adopted by different christian communities, on the Lord's day, is neither practical nor requisite.*---If any thing of this nature be left to the judgment of one man, it must be left to the judgment of all; for who, in religion, can imperiously dictate to another? And to have perfect conformity to a human standing rule, it is necessary that all men should be brought either to think alike,

which will never be the case, or be made to act contrary to their judgment, and consequently to their inclination; which would be worshipping God in a way very unacceptable to him. But should perfect conformity be practicable, it does not appear either what advantage religion at large would obtain from it, or what additional glory would redound to that God who has been studious of variety in all his works.

FIFTHLY.---*A rigid, superstitious, or painful observance of the Lord's day, is neither profitable to man, nor acceptable to God.*--- This is an error into which not only the catholic and Jew, but even many protestant professors are frequently running. Instead of making the sabbath a delight, they render it painful to themselves, and a burden to all their connexions. Religious services are stretched so long, prayers become so tedious, such rigid and nice restrictions are laid on their children and servants, that they are induced to hate even the very name of the day. That such sanctimonious practices are not necessary, we have proof from the lips of the Saviour himself; who warmly reprobated such supercilious conduct,^b Works

^b Matt. xii. 1—13.

of piety, necessity, and mercy; such as refreshing our bodies, feeding our cattle, visiting the afflicted,* and instructing the ignorant, are to be done: and those who best understand, and most venerate the word of God, will feel least scrupulous about doing them.†

SIXTHLY.---*Those persons cannot properly sanctify the sabbath, who can misemploy, without remorse, the rest of the week.*---God hates hypocrisy, and is always angry with those who act out of character when they draw near to him. He requires consistency in our conduct, and a suitableness in our general demeanour.

* 'Ye bless'd with *wealth*, (another name for *power* Of doing good,) O would ye but devote
A little portion of each seventh day,
To acts of *justice* to your fellow men!
The house of mourning silently invites.
Shun not the crowded alley; prompt descend
Into the half-sunk cell, darksome and damp:
Nor seem impatient to begone: inquire,
Console, instruct, encourage, soothe, assist;
Read, pray, and sing a new song to the Lord;
Make tears of joy down grief-worn furrows flow.'

GRAHAME'S *Sabbath*.

† 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?'—Is. lviii. 5.

There must be a habit of holiness in the week, or there will be no real religion on the sabbath. To-day, indeed, a man may put on a shew of devotion, may shake his head, lift up his eyes, clasp his hands, and sigh a hundred amens ; but if, in the week, as is often the case, he can neglect to embrace those religious opportunities with which he is favoured ; if he can forget his soul and his God ; or if he can run to places of banquetings and revellings ; can sit round the card-board, join in the dance, mingle with the vain, and be as vain as any ; or if he can curse, and lie, and steal, wallow in intoxication, and ridicule the religion of Christ, he cannot possibly hallow the Lord's day : he is at best a hypocrite ; he merely mimics the saint, has the form of devotion, but is entirely destitute of its feeling.

LASTLY.---*The time for beginning and ending the Lord's day, should be regulated by the rule employed for the computation of time, in the place where we reside.*---Though the Almighty specified the exact time for the commencement and close of various days appointed for certain ceremonial services,^c yet he has said

^c Lev. xxiii. 32.

nothing respecting the time when the weekly sabbath ought to begin or terminate. We are therefore left to measure the Lord's day by the practice of the antient church, or by the rules of custom and expediency.

Some have supposed that the Jews commenced their sabbath on the Friday evening, and ended it about the same time on the Saturday: but this opinion appears to be grounded on a mistake of jewish customs. The exercises of the Saturday evening were only preparations for the sabbath;^d the sabbath itself evidently commenced with them as it now commences with us:^e and by examining the sacred history with a critical attention, we shall perceive that the first sabbath commenced in the morning of the seventh day, and not in the evening of the sixth:^f and that Jesus Christ arose from the dead, and begun the christian sabbath in the morning of the first day, is evident beyond dispute.^g

We further remark, that we ought to begin and to end the Lord's day as we do other days of the week, otherwise we cannot properly

^d Mark xv. 42.

^e Ex. xvi. 23. Matt. xxviii. 1. John xx. 19.

^f Gen. ii. 2.

^g Matt. xxviii. 1.

attend to the true purport of the fourth commandment. But we begin and end our common days at midnight; therefore our sabbath days should begin and end at midnight also. And the advantages of measuring our sabbaths from midnight to midnight, instead of from evening to evening, must be clearly evident to every reflecting mind.^h

(2.) WE HAVE A FEW THINGS TO PROPOSE.---In order that the sabbath may be duly sanctified, it is required, FIRST,---*That if possible, no ordinary work should be done on it.* Those employments, which in the week engross the attention, and engage the hands, now, like Abraham's young men abiding at the foot of the hill while he ascended to sacrifice, should neither be followed, nor, if possible, even be thought of. 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy

^h For a more full discussion of this interesting particular, see 'The True Limits of the Lord's Day,' by W. Pynchon, Esq.; also, Cawdry and Palmer on the Sabbath, p. 3. ch. 2.

cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.'¹ To-day no business should be transacted, nor bargains made; no accounts should be examined, nor any books, not truly pious, should be read; no secular engagements should be made, nor property surveyed. It is a day on which we should shut out the world, with all its obtruding appendages. That was an excellent rule among the jewish doctors, and which should be attended to by all christian professors, namely, 'that whatever could possibly be done the day before, or might be deferred till the day following, ought not to drive away the sabbath.'

SECONDLY, *No unhallowed pleasure should be enjoyed on it.*---To-day there should be no gambolling on the green, nor strolling through the fields; no posting to distant places, nor parties in the family; no manœuvres on the water, nor amusements on the shore; no diversions abroad, nor frolics at home; no worldly discourse should be permitted, nor an unhallowed thought indulged. The pleasures of the sabbath should flow from engagements in the duties of religion and communion with God;

¹ Ex. xx. 8—10.

from a devout regard to every thing of a heavenly nature ; from an unshaken confidence in the promises of a wise and powerful Deity ; from faith in the Saviour, and from converse with those who proceed in the same holy course of piety with ourselves. To-day we should drink only of the rivers of Jehovah's pleasure, and be satisfied only with the fatness of his house. ' And thou shalt honour the Lord thy God on this day, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'^k

THIRDLY, *No religious duty should be neglected on it.*---This is a day of rest, not of idleness. It is like the rest of heaven, which admits of ' rest neither day nor night.' It calls us regularly to attend the means of grace ; to hear the word of God ; to join in the prayers of Zion, and to assist in singing the Saviour's praise ; then, the sacraments should be administered and collections made for the saints. ¹---Then, the civil magistrate, as far as becomes his official capacity, like good Nehemiah,

^k Isaiah lviii. 13, 14. ¹ Rev. iv. 8. Deut. xxxii. 46. Acts i. 14. Ps. cvii. 32.

should mark, and, if needful, correct the manners of his people.---Then, the preacher of the gospel should exert himself to convert the depraved, and reclaim the backslider ; to instruct the ignorant, and reprove the refractory ; to comfort the afflicted, and to guide his hearers ' in the way of peace.'---It becomes masters and heads of families to engage in prayer with their children and domestics ; to instruct the younger branches of the family in the principles of religion ; and to promote every thing calculated, spiritually, to improve their friends and dependants.---It becomes every person to read his bible, and other good books, and to store his mind with useful knowledge ; likewise to meditate on the goodness of God, his redemption by Christ, how he stands for another world, on the awful moments of death, and on his everlasting destination.

FOURTHLY, *It must be observed spiritually.*---Even the law of nature will tell you, that if we worship a God, spiritual in his being, and infinite in his perfections, something more than a mere form of devotion will be required from us. Indeed, no man is pleased with a respect which he knows comes not from the

heart. How much less, then, will the Eternal be satisfied with those hypocrites, ‘who draw nigh to him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, while their heart is far from him!’ Such people have never yet worshipped the Lord acceptably, and, if they do not amend their ways, they never will. ‘Be not deceived, God is not mocked.’ You may attend his house, hear with his people, and conform to every *minutia* of order; and yet be in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. ‘My son, give me thy heart,’ is the request of the Father of Spirits; and, if that be denied, our offering is vain.

It is recorded by John, ‘that he was in the spirit on the Lord’s day;’ and then he saw the vision of the Lamb: and if we would behold the King in his beauty, we must see him with the eye of a devotional mind. To-day, especially when engaged in the service of the sanctuary, bending around the family altar, or retired in the chamber; our minds should be detached from earthly things, our affections excited, and our thoughts absorbed, in pious contemplation. ‘They that will worship the Father, must worship him in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship

him.^m Be ye, therefore, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

(3.) WE HAVE A FEW THINGS TO ADD.---
We cannot better describe the manner in which we ought to observe the christian sabbath, than by making the following citations :---

FIRST, *The directory of parliament, published in 1644*, for the proper sanctification of the sabbath.ⁿ 'The Lord's day,' it reads, 'ought to be so remembered before-hand, as that all worldly business, of our ordinary callings, may be so ordered, and so timely and seasonably laid aside, as that they may not be impediments to the due sanctifying of the day when it comes.

The whole day is to be celebrated as holy to the Lord, both in public and private, as being the christian sabbath: to which end it is requisite that there be a holy cessation, or resting all the day, from all unnecessary labours; and not only a abstaining from all sports and pastimes, but also from all worldly words and thoughts.

^m John iv. 24.

ⁿ Vide Morer on the Lord's Day, Dial. 3.

‘ That the diet of that day be so ordered, as that neither servants be unnecessarily detained from the public worship of God, nor any other persons hindered from the sanctifying of that day.

‘ That there be private preparation of every person or family, by prayer for themselves, and for God’s assistance of the minister; and by such other holy exercises, as may farther dispose them to a more comfortable communion with God in his public ordinances.

‘ That all the people meet so timely for public worship, that the whole congregation be present at the beginning; and, with one heart, solemnly join together in all the parts of public worship, and not depart till after the blessing.

‘ That what time is vacant between or after the solemn meeting of the congregation in public, be spent in reading, meditation, repetition of sermons, especially by calling their families to an account of what they have heard, and catechising them; holy conferences, singing of psalms, visiting the sick, relieving the poor; and such like duties of piety, charity, and mercy; accounting the sabbath a delight.’

SECOND, *Acts of parliament still in force.*^o

---It is enacted---For enforcing religious practices, 'that all and every person and persons whatsoever, shall, on every Lord's day, apply themselves to the observance of the same; by exercising themselves thereon, in the duties of piety and true religion, publicly and privately.'

Against sports and pastimes;---'that there shall be no meetings, assemblies, or concourse of people, on the Lord's day, for any sports or pastimes whatsoever. Every person or persons offending in the premises, shall forfeit *three shillings and four-pence* for every such offence, or be set in the stocks for the space of three hours.'

Against ordinary labour;---'that no tradesman, artificer, workman, labourer, or other person whatsoever, shall do or exercise any worldly labour, business, or work of their ordinary callings, upon the Lord's day, or any part thereof (works of necessity and charity only excepted;) and that every person, being of the age ^{of} fourteen or upwards, offending in the premises, shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of *five shillings*.'

Against sales;---'that no person or persons

^o Vide Burn's Justice, in loco.

whatsoever shall publicly cry, shew forth, or expose to sale, any wares, merchandise, fruit, herbs, goods, or chattels whatsoever, upon the Lord's day, or any part thereof, under pain that every person so offending, shall forfeit the same goods so cried or shewed forth, or exposed to sale: excepting milk and mackerel, which may be cried and sold before nine o'clock in the morning, or after four in the afternoon.'

Against travelling by land ;—' that no drover, horse-courser, waggoner, butcher, higgler; their, or any of their servants, shall travel, or come into his or their inn, or lodging, upon the Lord's day, or any part thereof; upon pain that each and every such offender shall forfeit *twenty shillings* for every such offence.'

Against travelling by water ;—' that no person or persons shall use, employ, or travel upon the Lord's day, with any boat, wherry, lighter, or barge; except it be upon extraordinary occasions, to be allowed by some justice of the peace, upon pain that every person, so offending, shall forfeit and lose the sum of *five shillings*, &c.'

THIRD, *The advice of Baxter*.---' Spend the Lord's day but according to the common

principles of christianity and reason, and it shall suffice. Spend it as one that loveth God better than any thing in the world; and that taketh more pleasure in him than in sin and vanity. Spend it but as the necessities of thy own soul and thy family's require; as one that is glad of so honourable, gainful, and delightful employment, as the public and private worship of God, and the serious contemplation of the life to come; as one that knows the need and benefit of stated times for the worship of God; (and what would become of religion if the time were left to each one's will?) Spend it as men that put a just difference between the common business of this world, and the things that concern our endless state; and that have considered the proportion of one day in seven, in reference to this different consequence of the work. Spend it as men that have lost so much time as you have done, and who have need to make the best of the little that is left; and that are behind-hand in the matters of your salvation; and that have need to work with all your might, and who should be gladder of the helps of such a day, than of thousands of gold and silver. Spend it as those who believe they owe God as much as the Jews

did. Spend it as the antient christians spent it; that were wont to stay together almost from morning till night in public worship and communion.^p

Finally, Spend it, we add, as the laws of your country and your God require you. Spend it as a day for which you must be more particularly accountable to your judge, at his grand tribunal. Spend it, in the strength of God, as the chief time to ward off present and future misery, and to ensure temporal and eternal happiness; as the season on which your everlasting destiny more especially depends; and it shall suffice: we will ask no more; we will applaud your conduct; we will say, ‘Go on, go on, that is well done. Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord cometh, he shall find so doing!’*

p *Vide* Baxter’s works, vol. iii. p. 764. Lond. edit. 1707.

* The reader will observe, that, instead of expatiating minutely on the sanctification of the Lord’s day, I have here discussed it only in a general point of view; leaving the specific modes for observing it to be inferred from its violation, of which we shall treat in the two subsequent discourses.

HYMN.

- ‘ Welcome, sweet day of rest,
That saw the Lord arise ;
Welcome to this reviving breast,
And these rejoicing eyes.
- ‘ The King himself comes near,
And feasts himself to-day ;
Here we may sit, and see him here,
And love, and praise, and pray.
- ‘ One day amidst the place
Where my dear God has been,
Is sweeter than ten thousand days
Of pleasurable sin.

My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this ;
And sit and sing herself away,
To everlasting bliss.’

WATTS.

LECTURE III.



THE PROFANATION OF THE LORD'S DAY, BY
THE NATION IN GENERAL, AND BY INDIVI-
DUALS IN PARTICULAR.

WE enter on the subject, designed for our present consideration, with no small degree of reluctance; and gladly would we have transferred it to some one, whose superior judgment would have handled it better, or whose venerable age might have given a pathos to every sentence that he uttered: but having put our hand to the plough, we dare not look back till our work be accomplished.

We have, then, the very unpleasant task of charging our congregation, our neighbours, and our nation in general, with egregious breaches of the Lord's day. We have to expose those traits of immorality, which stain some of your characters, and render your christianity doubtful; to reprove that practice, which we have

observed with pain, and contemplated even with tears. We have to bring our remarks to bear on the conduct of our neighbours, whose profligacy and negligence of religion render them unworthy of the christian name; to compare the standard of sacred truth with the model of fashionable piety; to reprehend the misconduct of men, in every stage and station of life; to speak regardless of friend or foe, professor or profligate, or of any thing that might arise to arrest our impeachments. We have to extend our observations still wider, and to represent the maxims and manners of the nation, in contrast with the morality of the gospel; to notice the imperfection of some of our laws, and the unhappy tendency of others; and to expose the criminal negligence of many of our acting and subordinate magistrates, as far as it conduces to the profanation of the Lord's day:

‘ This is work, this is labour.’

By some we shall be considered assuming; by others unnecessarily rigorous; and by many disaffected towards our country: but to such we reply, ‘ destroy our propositions, refute our reasonings, or disprove our inferences; and if

this be impracticable, we enquire with the apostle, 'are we become your enemy because we tell you the truth?' Is faithfulness a mark of disaffection; or shall we be considered inimical to your interest, and ill-disposed towards our country, by developing those evils, which, unnoticed and unreformed, will prove our inevitable ruin? Must we prophesy smooth things, and deliver a falsehood to possess your favour? Oh, No! 'Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee: I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.'

We remark, however, that as we aim only at convincing the heart by a faithful detail of notorious facts, or by a correct delineation of common and corrupted manners; it will be proper, sometimes, to employ the usual phraseology of the day, and the language peculiar to the lower orders of society: let this be an apology for any common expressions that may occur, which might otherwise appear beneath the dignity of this place, or unworthy of so solemn and sublime a subject. If, also, we should drop any expressions which may savour of harshness, irony, or contempt; you will ascribe them to the same motive---a holy and ardent desire to affect the heart, by a faithful

exposure of human folly. You will also bear in mind, that no part of the following discourse is directed, exclusively, to any particular individuals or parties of mankind; but to sabbath-breakers in general; of every place, of every rank, and of every name. We now proceed to consider---

II. THE PROFANATION OF THE LORD'S DAY, BY THE NATION IN GENERAL, AND BY INDIVIDUALS IN PARTICULAR. And,

FIRST, THE SABBATH IS PROFANED BY THE NATION IN GENERAL:

(1.) *By tolerating the sale of goods on it.*
 ---The vending of articles of every description, on the Lord's day, is a custom as common as it is pernicious to civil and religious order. In walking through some of the streets of our large towns, and especially of the metropolis, on the sabbath, we are accosted from every quarter by mercenary people, who seek to make us sharers in their guilt by purchasing their goods. In fact, there is scarcely a village or hamlet in England, where this detestable traffic is not fully tolerated, and even warmly encouraged, by those who ought strenuously to suppress it.

The manner in which the Lord's day is profaned in this town, by the sale of goods, is truly distressing. The custom is much more common than many imagine. Where is the street, where is the lane, where are a hundred yards of ground, not shamefully disgraced, every sabbath, by every kind of traffic? It is observable, also, that the more populous the place, the more common is the practice, and the less obnoxious are the traders to penalty or punishment of any description. We conceive it will not be exceeding the truth if we affirm, that within the bills of mortality of London, the seat of royalty, and the resort of our rulers, there are more than ten thousand shops and stalls, set out in '*Sunday style*,' where you may purchase articles of every description, on the christian sabbath. And it is well known, that many petty shop-keepers, in country places, dispose of more commodities on this day, than during all the week besides.

How customary is it to see the 'shop-window half shut, and a godless shop-keeper staring across the counter, anxious to serve any body's boy with a half-penny cake, or a farthing candle!' Others, ashamed of their conduct, yet unwilling to reform their morals, will admit

you into their shop through a back door, and serve you by candle-light, in the blaze of noon. Some proceed on the superstitious principle, that, if they sell nothing while the people are at church, they may vend as much as possible before and after. Many, in piteous strains, will tell you, how exceedingly sorry they feel, that the people should come to their shop on the Lord's day; 'but you know,' they will add, 'our bread depends on their custom, and we are obliged to serve them, or starve;' while, at the same time, thousands are so desperately audacious as to make no scruple about carrying on this ill-timed traffic, in the most public manner, and to the fullest extent of their power. 'To buy, and sell, and get gain,' are all that these slaves of appetite, or dupes of mammon, are concerned about.

What a favourable opportunity is here furnished for the idle and profligate to profane the day of the Lord, by domestic bustle, to squander upon trash their weekly wages, and to attend their rounds of dissipation and riot! Yet, this, by a suppression of sales on the sabbath, might be partially, if not entirely, done away.

Nor can we but notice, that the more conscientious shop-keeper, frequently seeing his

customers laying out that money with others, which, were it not for sabbath-breaking, would be expended with him, is induced, though reluctantly, to follow the example, and, by custom, becomes hardened in the wickedness, and proves, in his turn, a tempter of others: so that nothing but a total suppression of the practice, will secure to the conscientious subject his rights, or be radically advantageous to the cause of the gospel, or the good of the nation.

(2.) *By suffering liquor to be sold on it.*--- Selling liquor on the Lord's day, is a custom which prevails, to a very alarming degree, in every part of our country. Every man, of a truly philanthropic spirit, cannot but be distressed at the constant and rapid increase of those various inns, which, though originally established for the necessary accommodation of man, are now converted into haunts of vice, and nurseries of mischief. Nearly the smallest town you can enter, will afford you the choice of two or three score. Many of these are kept by men, who have no principles, but such as are secular and selfish; and no manners, but such as deceive the simple, and deprave the good. Yet these very men are more engaged on the

Lord's day, and then receive more money, than during all the rest of the week. Probably, there is not one inn out of ten in the kingdom, where this nefarious practice is not carried on, 'to the dishonour of God, and the scandal of our holy religion.'

These inns, ale-houses, gin-shops, brothels, or whatever they may be called, particularly in large places, are commonly the resort of the debauched and infamous, where works of darkness are carried on in open day.

At the Sunday tavern, the *man* loses his senses, and ruins his constitution; injures his character, and wastes his property; beggars his family, which, in addition, he learns to abuse; disturbs his neighbourhood, and pollutes society; and often barter his soul for a pint of ale, after he has drunk an insupportable quantity; and in fact does, or is capable of doing, every kind and degree of vice, in the power of hell to invent, or a fiend upon earth to perform.

Here, the *female*, too, intoxicated with spirits, and forgetting the delicacy of her sex, rolls on the floor, and wallows on the dunghill. Here, disregarding her state and station, her accountableness to God, and her character

in the world; the peace of her conscience, and the prosperity of her family; she drinks till either frantic or stupid; and, by her nonsense or insensibility, collects the now leisureable mob; who either enjoy the sport or pity the abandoned wretch.

In the ale-house, to-day, even *children*, also, free from restraint, and anxious to swell with the importance which a few glasses of spirits infuse, are encouraged to spend their little cash, and to associate with the vilest companions. Here, they see the basest crimes approved of and applauded. Here, they vitiate their youthful bosoms; sow the seeds of every sin in the soil of their infant minds; which, fostered by depravity, and ripened by habit, soon bear fruit to perfection; and, as is often the consequence, are induced to become robbers, and at last downright murderers.

Thus the Sunday ale-house is but a lodge to Tyburn: and, hence, the negligence of our magistrates, in not duly suppressing the sale of liquor on the sabbath, is the occasion of numerous executions. They tolerate one crime which they know will infallibly lead to another; for doing the latter of which, however, the man shall lose his life; whereas, if the former had

been prevented, he had lived and brightened the domestic circle; had still been a useful member of society, and a dutiful subject of the British realm. And suffer us to add, that 'the man who, consistently with his duty, might have prevented his neighbour's death, and did not prevent it, is, to all intents and purposes, in the eye of humanity, of reason, and of God, guilty of his neighbour's blood.'^a

(3.) *By permitting so much travelling on it.** Though few men are so weak, as to fancy

^a Ezek. xxxiii, 1—10.

* 'Forth from their haunts, array'd in Sunday dress,
Through every avenue the thousands press;
Some, in equestrian pomp, bestride the backs
Of broken-knee'd or broken-winded hacks;
While thro' each gate a lengthen'd train departs,
Of coaches, gigs, and curricles, and carts;
Where, closely wedg'd, and jostling side by side,
The sweltering gentry take their Sunday ride,
Impatient longing for the cheap regale
Of village beef and pudding, punch and ale;
Where, round the common-table, strangers join,
Once in a week, like gentlefolks, to dine.
Thither a few short miles impell'd along,
By many a fretful stamp and lashing thong,
With feeble step the jaded cattle creep,
And their sad day of rest in labour keep !'

it a sin for a man, through urgent necessity, to use his beast on the Lord's day; yet the sacred oracles condemn, and most good people are decidedly against, the usual practice of then driving horses in mail, stage, or hackney coaches; or in common carts and waggons; or of riding them on rounds of ordinary business or pleasure, so common throughout the kingdom.

According to the lowest calculation that we can make, there are, in Great Britain and Ireland, more than two hundred thousand persons travelling every sabbath; that these employ upwards of two hundred thousand horses to convey them from place to place; and that their attendants, coachmen, guards, footmen, ostlers, shoeboys, waiters, cooks, housemaids, hair-dressers, turnpike-gate-keepers, with all the round of servants, are no fewer than two hundred thousand people more. The greater part of the latter are so occupied on the Lord's day, that to attend a place of worship, were they ever so desirous, is utterly impossible.

What a lamentable thing is it, that in a country professedly christian, such practices should be permitted; and, thereby, so many people, who might otherwise have been good

members of society, should be deprived of religious instruction; and be made, as they too generally are, the nuisance of our towns, and the pests of our public roads.

In consequence of the *mails*' travelling on the sabbath, multitudes of letters, papers, and parcels, are delivered in every town throughout the kingdom; and which necessarily occupy the attention, and unfit the minds, of those who receive them, for any religious engagements.

Hence, also, on every sabbath, you may see an uneasy group of all orders around the post-office window, waiting for their packet, as if the news of salvation were coming per post!

Besides, the post-masters and letter-carriers, of whom there are several thousands in this country, are now as fully employed as on any other day of the week. Such, indeed, is their office, that few people, properly concerned about another world, would enter upon it; though their pecuniary circumstances might render it desirable.

Again, passing through our streets, on the Lord's day, you may see the carriages mostly surrounded by crowds of people, who, with all the impoliteness of the ignorant and the

rude, stare at the passengers as if they were beings of another order, and examine the cattle as if they had never seen a horse before!

These carriages, moreover, whirling through our streets every hour of the day, greatly disturb the devotions of all those, who are so unfortunate as to have their place of worship near the public road.

With what daring effrontery, likewise, do the common *carters* travel through our towns to-day! If you admonish them respecting the impropriety of their conduct, you get nothing but abuse for your kindness; and to apply to a magistrate, is, in many cases, to set the culprit in the seat of judgment, and ever after to be branded as a malicious informer.

To the list of travelling coaches may be added those *boats, barges, packets, &c.* which are constantly running up and down our navigable rivers and canals on the sabbath. Here the gay and the giddy are to be found. Hither the young especially resort; forming tumultuous parties, and producing confusion wherever they go. Here they crowd the groaning vessel, and sail to the neighbouring rendezvous; where they hold their meetings of dissipation and riot; spending their hard-earned wages; and then

return home, with wearied, and sometimes wounded limbs, to starve, or beg, or cheat, or steal, for the necessaries of life, till Sunday come again.

(4.) *By allowing so many cattle to be driven on it.*---Upon our public roads, on the Lord's day, it is usual to see from ten to thirty Irishmen or Scotch Highlanders, driving from two hundred to a thousand head of black cattle, either from one northern fair to another, or from Ireland and Scotland up to the markets in the south. If you question them why they drive on the sabbath, they will plead necessity—the want of fodder. But is it not strange that this should always be the case? Is it not probable that such pleas are formed merely as cloaks of their selfish and sinister designs?

There is an act against this evil, but it is rarely enforced, and if enforced, is not sufficient to prevent the recurrence of the crime, or even to displace the contemptuous smile from the jobber's countenance. A fine of *twenty shillings*, as we recently shewed you, is incurred by driving cattle on the Lord's day; but, observe, the drover, by driving forward about five hundred beasts, saves upwards of ten pounds in

expences, besides the advantage of getting a day earlier to the market, which may be a hundred pounds more in his pocket. What, then, avails a penalty so trifling, when the inducement to incur it is so considerable? As for the necessity, which is commonly pleaded, would it not be advisable for the magistrates to examine the business, and to see what was real necessity, and what was only feigned or fancied? A respectable cattle merchant, however, very lately declared, 'that it seldom or never happened, that plenty of provender could not be obtained, if the drovers wished to procure it.

To all this may be added, the evil of driving great numbers of sheep, hogs, horses, cows, calves, &c. on the Lord's day, to reach Monday fairs and markets, which are so general in our nation. Indeed, it can hardly be imagined, how this very impolitic practice of holding Monday fairs and markets for cattle, or even for any thing, should be continued in a country professedly christian; when it invariably, and almost necessarily, makes such work for the preceding sabbath. The fairs and markets of Saturday too, are equally exceptionable; since they have a similar influence on profaning the following day.

Is it not very desirable, then, that the fairs and markets which fall on those days, or on any day which necessarily occasions bustle, or travelling on the sabbath, should be speedily altered? And might not a general arrangement be easily made, that would enable the merchant, drover, farmer, or poor people, to do all their business without infringing on the sacred hours and the religious duties of the Lord's day?

But to proceed further: as a specimen of sabbath profanation, hear the following account from a neighbouring periodical paper: 'Being in the habit of attending a country church, not far from this place,' says a writer in the *Cumberland Pacquet*, 'I was a little surprised, on Sunday last, to find the congregation much less than usual; and on enquiring into the cause of it, to my great astonishment, was informed, that it was occasioned by an *annual tup fair*, being held on that day at ***. I was also told,' proceeds the writer, 'by a person of unquestionable veracity, that it has, for a number of years, been invariably held on a *Sunday!* The evil tendency,' he adds, 'of so shameful a profanation of the sabbath, is obvious; and, one would suppose, that a prac-

tice so contrary to civil and religious order, would only need consideration, to be ultimately relinquished.'

(5.) *By tolerating the printing and sale of newspapers on it.*^b---While we cannot sufficiently admire the freedom of the press, and the liberty of circulation, granted to every man's sentiments, not hostile to civil order; at the same time we heartily wish, that a clause were inserted in the act, prohibiting men from using the press on the sabbath, or from circulating the productions of Sunday printers.

'No violation of this sacred day,' writes the editor of the *Philanthropic Gazette*, 'is so shameful as that of the Sunday newspapers; the numbers of which is every year increasing, and now amounts, according to the *Monthly Magazine*, to twenty more than are published on every other day of the week, morning and evening papers both included. The shameful manner in which the venders cover their shutters with placards, announcing every exhibition of crime and folly, is in the highest degree insulting to the christian name. And while not

^b *Vide Christian Monitor*, by Rev. J. Owen, p. 164.

a bible or prayer-book is to be purchased on this day, treason and infidelity are posted at every corner of the streets.'

There are, then, at the lowest estimate, twenty Sunday newspapers; and many of the editors boast of selling eight or ten thousand copies a week.* Hence, upwards of a thou-

* From the best information which I have been able recently to obtain, I find, that, in Great Britain and Ireland, there are just SIXTY-EIGHT different papers either printed or circulated every Lord's day. The evils of course are increased with the increase of publications.

The following paragraph from the Evangelical Magazine, (vol. XXVIII. p. 231) is worthy of the reader's consideration, and will serve to corroborate the statements we have made on the subject:—"It can hardly fail to strike the most superficial observer, that the present condition of the country presents an afflicting aspect—the principles of infidelity and irreligion on the one hand, and of disloyalty and sedition on the other, having been very generally and successfully diffused throughout the nation. In endeavouring to ascertain the origin of such a state of things, the general profanation of the sabbath, which is now so prevalent, and which has recently been adverted to in his majesty's proclamation, may assuredly be ranked among the principal causes of the evils we deplore; while it is to be apprehended, that nothing has had so obvious and powerful an effect in extending the violation of the sabbath as the whole system of SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS; it appearing, that of the papers at present published in London on a Sunday, there are circulated, at the lowest estimate, 45,000 copies; and that upon the most moderate computation, between two and three hundred thousand readers of those

sand men are employed as compositors, pressmen, venders, hawkers, &c. every Lord's day; and not fewer than two hundred thousand are more or less engaged in reading them. Also, when a second edition is published on the Monday morning, which is the case with some of the papers, the work of the Lord's day evening is considerably increased.

These papers are profusely spread in every tavern, coffee-room, ale-house, gin-shop, or other place of rendezvous, to attract thither the idle and the vain. And the god of this world, as an inspiring spirit, is very careful in choosing the topics to be discussed, and in dictating the language in which these infernal scriptures shall make their appearance. Thus, saving a few scraps of mongrel divinity, now and then stuck in a corner of a few of them, to be a little in Sunday fashion, they are crammed with all kinds of advertisements, with information of battles fought and won, with criticisms on theatrical performances, pugilistic details, pe-

papers are to be found in the metropolis *alone*; while the great number of pressmen, distributors, master-venders, hawkers, and subordinate agents, of both sexes and of all ages, who are necessarily employed on the sabbath, all tend to the most flagrant breach of the day of rest.'

destrian exploits, the most indecent debates; and, in fact, with every thing that can poison the minds and vitiate the morals of our population.

Is not this an evil, of which all the tender feelings of humanity, and the nobler principles of the christian religion, combine to solicit reformation? Is it not alarming to see so many manufactories of moral poison thundering onward during the Lord's day, supplying the stupid multitude with passports to the regions of hell, and prompting them thither faster than the devil could otherwise conduct them?

(6.) *By drilling our military on it.*---Thousands of our soldiers, especially of our young regiments, and volunteers, on the sabbath day, when they should retire from the world, and prepare for those disasters and death to which they are so peculiarly liable, are generally at parade in the field, serving their king, but neglecting their God. And this exercise is usually accompanied by a martial band, playing (from association of ideas) the most ludicrous and indecent airs.

This, moreover, is constantly attended by a gazing crowd, who are better pleased with

the field than the church, with the soldiers than the preachers, and with the foolish rant of a few trumpeters, than the heaven-inspired songs of Zion. In fact, it is a common thing to see multitudes of people, of all ages and stations in life, pressing to see the wonderful feats of our troops, rather than to attend the duties of religion, or to secure an interest in the favour of God. These are proceedings which cry aloud for reform. Oh! may their voice be heard and heeded by every rank of society.

To the arguments usually adduced in support of drilling on the sabbath, refutations shall be given in a following lecture. We will therefore close this particular, in the words of an eminent writer, on a similar occasion: 'God has, it is true, at this time given us peace; it is another trial; it is another call: we indeed may make it a great and a lasting blessing. But, alas! unless a reformation follow, peace does but skin our wounds; we bleed inwardly, and our very vitals waste. What will it avail us to repair our losses, if at the same time we pursue and multiply our sins? What will it signify that we are delivered from the fear of a mortal enemy, when, on this supposal, God must still have a controversy with our land?

A reformation, then, you will acknowledge necessary; if you neglect it, certainly your honour and prosperity will be very little, or of short duration. For this is the word of God in a much like case: 'them that honour me, I will honour: and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.'^c

(7.) *By allowing vestries for business on it.*---It appears quite incompatible with the principles of the gospel and the happiness of the people, particularly of the poor, for churchwardens, overseers, or any other parish officers, to have their meetings for business on the evenings of the Lord's day. This practice invariably banishes seriousness from the minds of the conductors of parochial affairs; it gives a bad example to the poor, many of whom it obliges to attend the house of business, when otherwise they might have attended the house of prayer; and it not seldom presents us with scenes of frivolity, profaneness, and oppression; and that too, often in the sanctuary of God. It would be superfluous to say, that these kinds

^c Lucas's Sermon before the Magistrates of London.

of meetings are common: he that knows any thing of the moral state of our country, must be convinced that there are few parishes where these vestries are held at any other time than the Lord's day evenings.

If you speak to the managers respecting the impropriety of such proceedings, they will retort, 'that it is lawful on the sabbath days to do good.' This we admit; but the answer is vague. 'Treading wine-presses, bringing in sheaves, lading asses, bearing all manner of burdens, and selling all kinds of victuals,' are certainly good; but are they proper for the sabbath? Nehemiah thought not. These vestries at best are about temporal matters; and could, as conveniently for rich and poor, be held on any other evening of the week as now. That can never be well done on the sabbath, that can be done as well at any other season.

We wish, therefore, that the time of these meetings may be speedily altered, in order that the poor may be enabled to attend the worship of God, or to employ the evening of the sabbath in duties of christian piety. This day is nearly all the time they have to prepare for an endless state. Oh! then, let not its sacred

hours be infringed, nor the religious advantages of the poor abridged.*

SECONDLY.---THE SABBATH IS PROFANED BY INDIVIDUALS IN PARTICULAR. And,

(1.) BY PROFESSORS OF RELIGION; who break it in various ways, as, *By neglecting to prepare for its approach.*---In the sacred scriptures we frequently read of a preparation for the sabbath; in British history, we learn also that in the year 966, *king Edgar* made a law, that the celebration of it should commence at nine o'clock on Saturday night; and a convocation of the *Scotch* clergy, assembled at *Perth*, in 1180, ordained that its preparation should begin at twelve o'clock the preceding day.

But alas! how little of this preparation do we

* 'I would ask you but one question,' says a pious writer;--- 'suppose that God had allowed you but *one* day in seven, on which to transact your temporal concerns, and had commanded you to keep six days holy to himself; would you, in that case, have suffered any one to interrupt you on this one working day, or have allowed yourself to spend any part of its time in worshipping your Creator? Ah! my friend, ask thy conscience this question; be faithful to thyself, and act with the consistency of a man of God.'

perceive in the conduct of modern professors. You make preparation for a journey; you are greatly concerned to prepare for a respectable guest, before he arrive; and you are ever attentive to improve an approaching opportunity for your temporal advantage: but to go a sabbath day's journey, to receive the Redeemer, or to hear the word of salvation, you make no preparation at all. Instead of dispatching your business early in the week, you saunter away the time in needless and unprofitable recreations, and your work is left till Saturday, when you have often more to do than on any other day; and are kept employed later than on any evening of the week besides: and it is to be feared, that not a little unnecessary work is often deferred till the Lord's day morning. This is no moderate violation of the fourth commandment.

By lying in bed too long in the morning.--- Many of you, apparently, supposing that the sabbath was made more for natural than for spiritual rest, act up to your principles, and lie in bed so late in the morning, that you find it almost impossible to perform any religious duty, either in the closet or family, and to get

in time to the house of God. You feel little difficulty in rising ever so early, when you have temporal affairs to transact, or worldly pleasures to enjoy; but when eternal concerns demand your attention, in the language of Solomon's sluggard, you say, 'a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.'

Or should you attempt to go through the duties of the morning, they are performed in such a hurry, that the devil is better served than God, and bad principles more cherished than good ones. You sometimes hasten from the chamber to the church, as if there were no halting place between the room of slumber, and the house of prayer. Certainly, you, who can hardly get time to break your fast, or to encompass the domestic altar, cannot enter upon the services of religion with that serious composure which their importance demands.

By attending more to dress than to private devotion.---Though some of you may rise ever so early, yet, instead of spending the morning in exercises of piety, you are engaged only in decorating your persons, and setting yourselves off to the best advantage; as if the great God

would bless you according to the shape or the texture of your attire, or could see nothing of you but the outside. Indeed, many of you, and especially of the young, are so long at the glass, and so anxiously engaged in priming your clothes, that one might imagine, instead of preparing for the house of God, you were going to some place of public resort, where fashion only was to be displayed, and where the distinguishing features of eminence were a fine coat or a well-trimmed mantua.

Far are we from saying any thing against dress, of any quality or fashion: true religion consists not in good or bad apparel; and a person may worship God in the finest clothes as well as in the most common. What we aim at, is to expose that waste of time, and that immoderate concern about your dress, which make the duties of devotion give way to the employments of decoration.

By going to a place of worship with unconcern.---If we follow some of you to the sanctuary, we perceive, that every step you take is a demonstrative evidence of unconcern about your souls, and of irreverence towards God. You hold foolish talk with every one you meet;

you make half-a-dozen calls in your way ; you loiter about ; and, of necessity, enter the place of worship too late to engage in half the services. And, what is still worse, you disturb all the congregation, as you make your noisy appearance ; advancing into the awful presence of God, with an indifference you dare not manifest in entering the mansion of a neighbouring esquire.

One might think, indeed, that some of you attend so late, in order to attract the attention of the audience, as you figure through the aisle ; or, at best, we must suppose, that you have little regard for the early parts of divine worship, such as singing and prayer ; and that you think, if you hear the sermon, and remember the text, you have performed the whole duty of man.*

* ‘ Some *time* attendance with well-manag’d care,
 To catch the sermon, but escape the prayer ;
 These, deeply anxious not to be too soon,
 Begin their morning services at noon ;
 Steal into church, asham’d of being seen,
 Or rudely interrupt the solemn scene ;
 Heedless of what is past, or what comes next,
 Content, if not too late, to hear the text.’
 Constrain’d by conscience, or for custom’s sake,
 They gulp instruction as they physic take ;

By being indifferent about what is said in the house of God.---How common is it to see one person stretching here, and another yawning there; one sleeping on this side, and another nodding on that, during divine service! You pass away your time as if your pew were a pillow, and the house of God a bed-room.

Others of you appear concerned to know only the fashions of the day; hence you are actively engaged in turning your heads from side to side, and looking around in every direction, to examine the cut of such a gentleman's coat, or the ornaments of such a lady's head-dress.

Many of you, while in the house of God, think of little but the singing, and of that, attend more to the sound than the sense; and therefore to such, an opera would be much more pleasing than the solemn worship of God.

Some of you mind little more than the respect which your fellow worshippers pay you: the chief seat in the synagogue, the attention of a gentleman in handing you into it, and the stupid

Think both may benefit disorder'd man,
Yet take of each as little as they can.'

AGE OF FRIVOLITY.

cringe of the congregation, are far more delightful than a clear gospel sermon, the most serious prayers, or the presence of a gracious Saviour.

While others of you are engaged in forming schemes for the ensuing week, or diverting your attention by any nonsensical matter; you regard not the salvation of your souls; you are not affected by the finest descriptions of the Saviour's death; nor attracted by any exhibition of his delectable beauties. You feel unconscious of your lost condition, and regardless of your future destiny. Sometimes, however, you hear for others; and often fail not to make that pungent application of the discourse to them, which is too commonly more appropriate to yourselves.

By hearing the truth with a prejudiced mind.---Some of you attend the house of God under the influence of domineering prejudice; and feel determined, before you enter it, not to yield to what you shall hear. You will still think your own thoughts, and still do your own ways. You come, if not with argument, yet with rigid determination to favour, and, if possible, to defend, your own sad course of living.

The strongest arguments, and the fairest deductions, if they convince, they will not convert you.

Unwilling to acknowledge your former ignorance, you will remain as you were ; preferring a wounded spirit to an honest heart. You come to listen, not to learn ; to spend an idle hour, not to make improvement. Should the preacher but describe your case, and touch your conscience, you are angry with him : you suppose that he improperly points at you, and impolitely exposes your shameful conduct. On the same principle, Asa was wroth with the seer ; and Ahab thrust Micaiah, the prophet, into the dungeon.

By listening as critics rather than as christians.---Some of you, with the unfounded pretensions of the critic, instead of attending to the vast concerns of your souls, are often vaunting on your superior knowledge of the preacher's province ; and are frequently looking to see if the motion of his head, his hands, his eyes, come up to the standard of your, perhaps, vitiated ideas of pulpit gesture. Your chief engagement in the house of God is, to examine the minister's delivery, the various figures

of his language, and the treatment he may afford your favourite tenets.

Far are we from inculcating an implicit approval of all that is said, or of bearing with the nonsensical rant of every pulpit declaimer. 'To take heed what you hear, and to judge how it is spoken,' are surely the hearer's province. What we condemn is, attending only, or principally, to the preacher's imperfections, and triumphing in your discernment, as if you were wiser than he. This is base, this is contemptible; yet this is the devotion of some, generally of the ignorant, though highflying, professors of the day; the seat of whose piety, if it may be allowed the name, is only in their eyes and ears.

By attending public worship only once a-day.---Is it not a lamentable fact, that many of you, after attending the ordinances of religion once on the sabbath, think that you have done your duty, and that God and your souls require no more? Is it not lamentable to see such indifference about that, which our pious forefathers attended to at the peril of their lives: to see that so few of you have religion really at heart? for at heart you cannot have it: a

regard for duty, a respect for order, a love for your souls, would make you more diligent at the house of God. You, perhaps, are regular; but it is once a-day: you sleep too long, to come in the morning; you dine too late, to go any where in the afternoon; if you are in your seat at night it is enough!

Nor suppose we forget that we are addressing professors of religion: 'we know that we speak, and whereof we affirm:' professors of religion we address, and the conduct of professors we describe. We do not, however, include the christian, who would attend the house of God more frequently if he had it in his power. Many attend not at all, and are blameless! others attend once a-day, and are criminal for attending no more: circumstances alter cases. We reprehend the conduct of those only, who might attend, but who will not, merely because they will not.

By wilfully forgetting what you have heard.---Doctrines are remembered in proportion to the attention and concern which they excite when at first delivered, and to the diligence of our minds, for some time after, in excluding other thoughts, and in reflecting on those

we wish to retain. But mark the majority of christian professors. Do they hear the gospel with attention? do they ruminate over it with a diligent care? The very contrary is the case. They appear anxious not to understand, at first, or to forget what they were obliged to understand, afterwards. Hence, the reputed scholar is often a child in religious knowledge. After you have left the house of God, you pay half-a-dozen visits before you get home; exchange a hundred empty compliments with your neighbours; or are all the while discoursing on temporal affairs; paying no attention to what you have heard.

You spend the intervals of worship, and the evening of the day, in reading the newspaper, romances, profane history, books of science, and a world of trash; 'every way calculated, says a pious prelate, 'to carry you off from all serious thoughts of God and religion, and from the meditation of another world; and to give the devil an advantage and an opportunity that he never fails to take, to steal the good seed, the word of God, which you have heard that day, out of your hearts, and to make it of none effect.'

By strolling about with ungodly companions.---Between the hours of divine service, and in the evening of the Lord's day, particularly in the summer season, you are seen enjoying your walk in the fields, the public ways, and the common rendezvous of the vain; where you can scarcely be distinguished, either by your gravity or conversation, from the surrounding rabble. The idle chit-chat of the vulgar multitude, the vacant stare, and the wild unmeaning roar of the lowest wretch, are often seen and heard to-day in those who bear the christian name, and who ought, by their gravity, to be distinguished from the impious world, and ever to avoid its vile and foolish maxims.

Far be it from us to speak against a retired walk in the garden, the field, or any secluded situation; or against walking with a few pious people for a pious purpose; since it may tend to great advantage. But such walks as many of you take on the sabbath-day, are dishonourable to God, unprofitable to yourselves, and prejudicial to the cause you profess to maintain. If we walk on this day, it should be, like Enoch and Noah, 'walking with God;' or, at least, with people after his own heart, for his honour,

the church's welfare, and our own spiritual improvement.

By running about from one place of worship to another.---There is a class of the professing world which is usually denominated 'SERMON-HUNTERS,' from their habit of running up and down to see fine congregations, and to hear strange preachers. 'They never continue in one stay.' This sabbath they will be here, the next will be there, and the following half-a-score miles from home; answering the description of holy writ, 'beguiled unstable souls; clouds without water, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.'*

* ' This is the day of sermons ; hence appears
 A tribe whose godliness lies in their ears ;
 Mere sermon-hunters, roving here and there,
 Alike untaught, unsettled every where :
 For ever on the bustle to be wise,
 But, wanting patience, never reach the prize ;
 Despising oft the word within their reach,
 Then trudge ten miles to hear some fav'rite preach ;
 As stupid boys from school to school proceed,
 Try every book, but never learn to read.'

In conjunction with this is another evil, more peculiar to large towns, that of needlessly employing horses and servants to convey them from one place of worship to another; by which practice they violate the commands of heaven, in depriving the horses of rest, and in preventing the servants from attending the house of God, or ever learning how to inherit eternal life. Such people should remember, that their horses need rest as well as they; and that their servants have souls as well as themselves.*

It is also worthy of notice, that a great many respectable people, who live in villages, contiguous to large towns, instead of staying at home, and promoting, by their presence, the cause of Christ in their own neighbourhood, will drive off to join a more respectable au-

* A lady stepping into a hackney coach one sabbath morning, in order to ride to a place of worship, asked the driver, if he never went to church on the Lord's day? and received the following reply: '*No, madam; I am so occupied in taking others there, that I cannot possibly get time to go myself!*' If coach-drivers are kept from attending a place of worship, and consequently are left ignorant of themselves, their God, and their eternal destiny, pray whom are we to blame? Let some of our fine christian professors ponder over this sentiment.

dience, and to hear a fine looking parson, to the discouragement of the worthy village preacher, and the retarding of the gospel where it is most needed. Such people seek the orator more than the preacher of Christ; and to please the eye and ear more than to profit the heart, or to benefit the christian interest.

By neglecting the house of God altogether.---Strange as it may appear, there are many who call themselves christians, that make very little scruple about neglecting public worship for a whole sabbath, and some of them for a whole month together. The most trifling indisposition will keep you away. When more disordered on the Saturday and Monday, you can attend to your daily labour with little inconvenience; but a slight indisposition confines you to your room on the Lord's day. You apologize, 'we were too poorly to venture out---or the day was cold---or the weather was rainy---our clothes were not fit to wear---or a friend called on us just as we were coming away---and we read our bibles at home, which is just as well as going to church or chapel.'

Such, and various other excuses, will many professors make, to cloak their neglect of

attending divine ordinances; but all of them are weak, and some of them wicked.

If you could attend to your business, you might brave the cold and rain to meet your God. As for your apparel, God will examine your hearts and not your garments. If a visitor call on you, bring him to the house of God with you, or bid him call again.* And as for reading your bibles at home, as a substitute for attending the house of God, is it not supposing that God and good people have been in an eternal mistake; the former by instituting public worship, and the latter by preferring it to private? There may be cases when we cannot attend; but we should never plead a necessity for staying at home when no such necessity exists. Consider the public worship of God a privilege as well as a duty, and you will not neglect it so often as you are accustomed to do.

By neglecting intimate communion with God.---It is possible for a man on the sabbath to be externally sober, to attend the means of grace regularly, and to observe every form of

* This was the practice of the Countess of Huntingdon.

religion correctly, and yet sadly to misemploy the precious hours of this precious day. To many of our precise, and, if possible, over-righteous professors, this admonition is awfully applicable: 'remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.' They read the word of God, but it is done with inconsideration, or only to strengthen their notions respecting some disputed, and perhaps unimportant points. They hear the gospel, but it is attended to in the same manner, or for a similar purpose. 'Their fellowship is not with the Father, nor with his Son, Jesus Christ,' but with the genius of unprofitable disputation; a practice every way calculated to sour the temper, and to produce a malevolent feeling towards all who may differ from them in explaining the sacred scriptures.

While the flame of devotion is kindled in every neighbouring breast, and glowing in every surrounding countenance, these individuals are as cold as the clay, and as palid as death. They stand among the saints like withered trees in a blooming grove, and though reckoned with the righteous, like Judas, who was numbered with the twelve, are walking with Christ, and travelling to hell. They make no earnest and ardent application to God for mercy; they hold not the

majesty of heaven in profound veneration; they exhibit no unfeigned expression of attachment to God, his people, nor his interest in the world; they have not that nameless something, 'the secret of the Lord,' by the possession of which they would ascertain their favour with God, and manifest, that while they had the form of devotion, they also felt its heavenly influences.

By not observing it in an evangelical manner.---By observing the Lord's day evangelically, we mean observing it in the name of the Son of God. No hymn of praise that we can present, though its melody exceed the song of angels; no prayers that we can offer, though we were as importunate in them as the woman of Canaan, or wrestled for a blessing like the patriarch Jacob, will be heard with acceptance in heaven, or answered with advantage upon earth, unless they ascend to God in the Saviour's name. Nor will all our attendance on the means of mercy afford us the least satisfaction or support, except we present ourselves as the humble pleaders of a Saviour's blood. Yea, should we live from infancy, till hoary age, like Samuel, in the sanctuary; should we prefer our habitation, like David, and be as diligent in our

duties as the venerable Paul; still, if we do not all with a reference to the Lamb, we shall hear of 'vengeance beginning at the house of God,' and shall find that the temple of mercy is, to such professors, but a splendid corridor to the abodes of endless perdition. 'No man,' said Jesus, 'can come to the Father but *by me*.'

Now, are there not many persons that pray, and sing, and appear very devout, who yet, through ignorance or pride, are little concerned about offering their praises and petitions in the name of Christ, and for his sake alone? Brethren, let your consciences determine whether you have not attended a place of worship, sabbath after sabbath, without implicitly and totally relying on the mediation of Christ for acceptance with God. To some, perhaps, this doctrine may appear too humiliating. They say, 'have we nothing of our own to plead?' We answer, you have nothing. On this sacred day you may offer to God all you possess; you may sacrifice your property, your comforts, yourselves, and for want of doing it in the name of the Son of God, will hear a disgusted deity upbraid your devotions, saying, 'bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and *sabbaths*, the calling of assem-

blies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity ; even your solemn meeting ; your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me ; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood.^a

HYMN.

Every thought should be directed
 Heaven-ward through this hallow'd day :
 Worldly themes should be rejected,
 Themes that draw the soul away :
 'Tis the day of sacred rest,
 'Tis the day that God has bless'd.

O what glorious themes invite us,
 When we look on mercy's plan ;
 These are themes may well delight us,
 Themes of joy to guilty man :
 Full of sweetness, full of grace,
 Suited to the sinner's case.

Why should we grow weary thinking
 Of the Saviour's grace and love ;
 From those springs his people drinking,
 Get a taste of joys above :
 O ! 'tis good the Lord to know,
 'Tis our heaven begun below.

ANON.

^a Is. i. 13, 14, 15.

LECTURE IV.



THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE most direct, and, indeed, the only method that ministers can adopt to reform an immoral person, is, first, to exhibit the law by which his life should be regulated; then, to shew him how he has broken it; in the next place, to explain the loss he is likely to sustain on account of his crimes; and, finally, to catch the favourable moment of impression to enforce the necessity of becoming a better man.

To the first of these particulars, in connection with the subject under consideration, we formerly attended. Our business, at present, is with the second, namely, to make such an exhibition of your sabbath transgressions, before the eye of your recollection, that you may recognize them for your own, detest them for their enormity, and resolve, in the strength of God, to do so no more.

This procedure is warranted, not only by the rules of reason, but also by the word of truth. This was God's method with the antient Israelites: 'to shew thee what was in thy heart.' This was the Saviour's method with the woman of Samaria: 'he told me all that ever I did.' And this was the method of the great apostle St. Paul: 'but if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.'

In our last lecture, we directed your attention to the profanation of the Lord's day, by the nation in general, and by professors of religion in particular. We now proceed to notice its violation by heads of families, by men of business, and by people of pleasure. The Sabbath is profaned---

(2.) BY HEADS OF FAMILIES:---*In mis-employing the preceding night.*---It is a very common practice for masters and heads of families to be engaged themselves, or to employ their children and servants, in cleaning

their houses on a Saturday till a very late hour, and often till it 'begin to dawn towards the first day of the week.' When they lie down they are uncommonly fatigued with labour; and, because they have been deprived of rest half of the night, to make it up, they will sleep half of the following day; or, if they rise as usually, are quite unfitted for engaging in any of those lively services to which the christian sabbath invites them. To prepare for the sabbath is proper and necessary; but when this preparation tends to violate what it professes to sanctify, its end is entirely defeated. To prepare for the Lord's day is to do more than to clean your houses, and to set your temporal affairs in order;---it is to prepare your heart, and so to dispose of your thoughts, that the sabbath may not be abused by ungodly thinking, any more than by ungodly acting.

Nor is it considered a phenomenon, by the observers of fashionable amusements, for some of our *religious* gentry to have their balls and card-parties on the Saturday evening, and to keep up their festive riots till one, two, or three o'clock in the morning; and then, perhaps, on the sabbath, 'like nocturnal birds awaked at noon,'

to attend divine worship, or some other place of public resort, with blood-shot eyes, and other appearances, evidently betraying the hurry and confusion of the preceding night. But, generally, the forenoon is passed away in painful indolence; and the minds of these modern epicures are engaged in reflecting on their foolish diversions, and their senses employed in absorbing the fumes of the preceding festivity.

In dispensing with the religious duties of the morning.---The manner in which some of you spend the early part of the christian sabbath is truly shameful. Single out, in your minds, a family which is not attentive to the concerns of the soul, and see how its members employ the Lord's day morning. Some of them are up, perhaps, early, and others are in bed very late; some are cleaning their clothes, and others themselves; some are washing the house, and others are sweeping the street: the parents are at breakfast, the children at play, and the servants at work; some are quarrelling about this trifle, and others are aggravating one another in the most unfeeling manner. The whole house presents

us with a scene of bustle, confusion, and impiety.

Look around for the family altar; alas! it was never erected: enquire for the sacrifice of thanksgiving, which should, on this morning especially, be offered to the Lord; and they will stare at your incomprehensible query: ask for the bible---it is lost; and when found, is covered with dust: try to discover those peculiar traits which should distinguish this morning from others; but all you can find is a most culpable indifference about divine things.

This, though a homely, is a correct description of many a house on the earlier parts of the sabbath-day. Perhaps some present, while they look into this unpolished mirror, may discover too striking a resemblance of themselves and of their proceedings. 'Be not, then, like the man, who beholdeth his natural face in a glass; and, going his way, forgetteth what manner of person he was.'

In then neglecting the cultivation of your minds.---What little regard do some of you manifest on this day to improve its hallowed hours, in furnishing your minds with religious knowledge! You meditate not on the things

which make for your peace ; you converse not with your families about the works and ways of God ; and, should you read your bible, or any other good book for a few minutes, it is done in a way as neither to inform your judgment, nor to improve your heart. Sabbaths come and go ; but your head is no wiser, nor your heart more devout. You live year after year, amidst the best means of instruction, with the scriptures in your own tongue, and in your own houses, and are still the dupes of ignorance, and the slaves of hell. The simplest truth of the gospel you will not learn, and the easiest command of heaven you will not obey.

Nor are you less inattentive to the instruction of your children and servants. Like their parents and employers, they are strangers to themselves, to the doctrines of christianity, and to the place whither, as accountable creatures, they are constantly tending. They are never catechised, and seldom admonished ; but, on the contrary, are suffered to grow up in moral ignorance, the spring of almost every immoral action. Is this training your children in the fear of the Lord ? Is this leading them in the path from which they should never

depart? You travel to the chambers of eternal death, and take your families with you!

In detaining so many from the house of God.---In some of your families, the Lord's day is sauntered away in doing worse than nothing. The parents and masters, who ought to give an example of diligence on the means of grace, are often the slowest in attending them. You will visit any place rather than the sanctuary, and do any thing rather than what God commands you. The language of such a parent seems to be: 'As for me and my house, we will serve the devil.' The father must stay at home to smoke his pipe, and to refresh his wearied frame; the mother, forsooth, must mind her family: and what from one cause or another, there are now dwelling, even within the precincts of many a tabernacle, heads of families, who have lived there several years, without once crossing its sacred threshold.

And while they act thus themselves, they can, but with little propriety, command their children to do otherwise. Indeed there are many parents, who, having cleaned, dressed, and fed their little ones, send them adrift into

the lanes and fields, merely to keep them out of the way. Others will attend the house of God themselves, while their children are running about, committing, for aught they know, every kind of wickedness. Pray, is this christian conduct, is this parental affection ?

Nor is it with any less degree of sorrow, that we see so many servants now detained from the worship of God. In vain, for them, does the sabbath sun arise ; it calls them to their usual, or to augmented, labours. In vain are the gates of the temple thrown open ; they, if ever so desirous, can seldom enter them. In vain, for them, does the preacher explain and apply the glorious gospel of the blessed God ; they can hear neither the thunders of Sinai, nor the whispers of Zion : they are deprived both of religion and of rest ; and, at night, sit or lie down more fatigued with domestic duties than at any other time.

In having unusually fine and ill-timed meals on it.---It is customary, especially among the labouring classes of society, to have, if possible, a more bountiful and luxuriant dinner on the Lord's day than on any other. Every penny is saved, all their wits are engaged, and

every hand is employed to furnish the board with an excellent repast. Nothing, scarcely, is thought of all the morning, or perhaps for a day or two before, but 'what they shall eat, and what they shall drink,' for dinner. Religion is quite out of the question; at least, it cannot be thought of till the afternoon.

We are far from thinking it criminal for a poor man to have something comfortable with his family on this day: yet the inordinate concern generally taken about it, which is often followed by a neglect of attending the house of God, and by starvation half of the remaining week, is not at all becoming either the christian sabbath, or the christian name. This is making the belly your God, and your devotions to consist in eating and drinking.

Nor are ill-timed meals less obnoxious to reprehension, since their consequences are equally pernicious. It is very usual, especially among the higher classes of the people, to have their meals at such times as prevent them from attending the house of God. When the bell tolls for morning service, they are just sitting down to their breakfast; and in the afternoon and evening, when pious people are again repairing to the worship of their Maker,

they are commencing their dinner or tea. They must accommodate their appetite at the expence of their soul; and mind things temporal, to the neglect of things eternal. If our fine folks can get to a place of worship once in the day, they think it quite sufficient. During the latter services of the sabbath, they gorge over their plate, and dose over their bottle; and suffer the priest and the poor to divide the feast of the gospel between them.

In forming so many parties of pleasure on it.---Some of the most splendid parties that our country has witnessed, have been formed on the Lord's day. Every dainty that nature could furnish, that art could form, or money could buy, has been served upon the board of our right honourable infidels, to charm the eye, and to gratify the taste. 'And the harp, and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts.' The best bands have played their loveliest airs, and the ladies have sung their sweetest lays. Oaths, for fashion sake, and to display the man of honour, have echoed through the festive hall. The frothy bowl has flown around, and these dupes of Bacchus have been as devout in serving this wine-swollen deity, as

christians could be in worshipping Jesus Christ.^a This is sanctifying the sabbath according to the modes of the great!

But as our inferior gentry always ape their superiors, there are many parties, on the sabbath, of the would-be-fine, who sanctify the day as much like their betters as they can. Here, collected, you may see the grey-headed, the decrepit, the death-marked part of our community, wasting their invaluable time in childish and sinful conversation; and frequently the evening of the day is spent in the billiard-room, over the chess-board, or card-table. Here they are at home; here they shine; and here they contemn the infatuated few, who prefer an hour in the courts of God's house, to a thousand in the tents of wickedness. Oh, ye thoughtless souls! how long will ye bow before the shrine of impiety, and worship the idol of the age! What will ye do in the great antitype of the sabbath; will ye spend it in parties of sinful recreation, or will ye turn gamblers in heaven? If not, let this day be employed in training your immortal minds for the duties of the world to come!

^a Vide *Evang. Mag.* vol. xiii. p. 237.

In connecting levity and excess with the observance of certain solemn rites.---The celebration of marriage, baptism, and funerals, if accompanied, as it generally is, with sumptuous entertainments, and, in many cases, with a great deal of frivolity, is not at all suitable to the sanctity of the christian sabbath.

How often is *marriage* celebrated on the first day of the week; and how generally do the company, on such an occasion, indulge in nonsense and impiety; and all this under the eye of the venerable parents of the wedded pair. To any thinking man, it must seem a very unhappy omen, if he saw the first day of wedlock, and that too the Lord's day, prostituted to irreligious festivity. Indeed, if marriage in itself be only a civil contract, which doubtless is true, it is as improper for the sabbath as contracting for an estate: religious appendages cannot alter the nature of the thing, and should be attached to the bartering of our property, as well as to the disposal of our persons. On this principle, a synod of bishops, in 836, made a decree, 'that no marriage should be allowed on the Lord's day;' but, alas! for our age, the dupes of ignorance were wiser and better than we.

Nor have those who, on the sabbath, by *baptism*, dedicate their children to God, and immediately after devote themselves to the service of Satan, which is too often the case, any tolerable reason to imagine that the blessing of God will rest on them or their offspring.

And *burials*, unless absolutely necessary, especially those accompanied with a fine dinner, as is mostly the case in many country places, are far from becoming a christian people. Besides, at funerals in populous towns, how many undertakers, hearse - drivers, grave - diggers, mutes, bearers, and others, are unnecessarily and laboriously engaged on this holy day. Bury not, at least in this way, on the sabbath! for not all your sighs, your tears, nor your extorted ejaculations, at this solemn season, will, by any means, atone for the violation of the day.

By parading the streets with your youthful dependants.---A man needs not be deeply read in the annals of domestic folly, to know that multitudes of parents stroll about in the streets and lanes, fields and woods, of our towns and their neighbourhood, for no other purpose than to kill this sacred time. They appear as

fond of mirth as their children, and more expert at making it. The young, however, must be taught this useful science.

Behold, then, the aged matron, with her sprightly train, as if incognizable to the great searcher of hearts, and accountable neither to man nor to God, parading our places of common resort! See the husband and wife, each carrying a child, and two or three others walking by their side, loitering about they know not whither, nor why, nor when to return! What are their manners? either rustically coarse, or effeminately soft. What is their conversation? at best nonsensical, and often profane. This their children must learn, and, in turn, will repeat in triumph what their parents taught them in fun. By this means, too, the house of God is neglected, serious thinking banished, and the parents themselves made more profane; for he that can run with the godless, and agree with the wicked, will find little difficulty in 'sitting in the seat of the scornful,' and in madly defying the vengeance of the living God.

*In giving your children and servants too much liberty on it.--*It is very common for

masters and heads of families, to give their young people liberty to do as they please on the Lord's day evening. Hence, at this season, our streets are full of noise and tumult. As you pass, you are stopped by the throng, and almost buried in the crowd. You must see and hear, what cannot fail to shock every person that has the least regard either for modesty or religion. These juvenile tribes pour from your houses on a sabbath evening, like bees from their hive, on a morning in June; as wild, as noisy, and as dangerous too. What man of feeling can view these victims of folly and infatuation without heaving a sigh, and praying to heaven for the reformation of their manners? Is there no season for recreation but this? Is there no method of pleasing your dependants, but one that displeases your God?*

* 'To take children to church on the Lord's day morning, and to let their afternoon and evening be devoted to that innocent play which is most congenial to their ages,' as proposed in a bill lately introduced into parliament, purporting to be for general education and improvement in morals and godliness, would be one of the most inconsistent and impolitic practices that could possibly be sanctioned by civil authority. What, in fact, would the passing of this bill be, but a revival of the ever-to-be-execrated Declaration of Sports, and a signal for renewing those

‘ Let any one look abroad into our streets,’ says a venerable clergyman, ‘ and say, whether that be the season, when any head of a family, who has the least regard for the virtue and safety of his domestics, would choose to trust them abroad. We complain of the corrupt state of our female servants; and no wonder, with such a practice as this in existence. More young women, probably, are ruined, first or last, by this one cause, than by any other that can be named.’

In neglecting the duties of the Lord's day evening.---In many families, this hallowed season, a season when every thing seems to invite devotion, when the spirits are most

practices which made our country groan, our virtuous forefathers to mourn, and which brought so many of our fellow creatures to the most untimely end.

The passing of this bill in its present shape would, in effect, be signing the warrant to fill our prisons with our much-endear'd children, to take them from prison to execution, and from execution to drive them to endless perdition. It is hoped, however, that the prudence, the policy, the piety, and the humanity of our public and our magistrates, will set their faces against a measure so portentous of mischief to the nation, so injurious to the interest of mankind, and so opposite to the commandment and honour of God.

cheerful, and the mind most at ease, is spent in a way which neither pleases the Lord, nor profits themselves. No bible is read, no hymn is sung, no prayers are offered, no parental knee presses the floor, nor infant hands, in precise position, are placed across the chair. The conversation is not of holiness nor of heaven. Every heart is set upon the world; and their words and actions accord with their sentiments.

What levity, what language, what tumult, do most families, on a sabbath evening, present you! They are blessed with opportunities which they never embrace, and with favours for which they never are thankful. They rise and receive, they lie down and repose, regardless of the friend that bestows their blessings, and of the hand which softens their bed. What reflection will a dying hour afford you, ye profaners of God's holy sabbath? Will joy sparkle in your eyes, and triumph swell your bosoms, because you have thus wounded the feelings of the pious, and passed your sabbath evenings in neglecting your souls, your families, and the service of your God!

The christian sabbath is profaned---

(3.) BY MEN OF BUSINESS; of whom we shall select a few of the principal classes. And, first, it is profaned---

By mechanics.---Under this term are comprised multitudes of people, notorious for violating the sabbath of the most high God. We will specify a few of them.---The *builder* now shuts his work-shop door, blinds the window, and labours at noon by a candle or sky-light. If, however, he lay by his ordinary implements, yet his measuring-line, rule, and drawing instruments are employed. He plans, he plots, he measures, and contrives; and, probably, by this means, realizes more money, than during a week of laborious exertion.

The miller drives his machinery, late in the morning, early at night, and often all the day long. For the most part living in the valley, and sequestered from the sight of men, he takes it for granted that he is unseen by his maker: and, to cover his mercenary actions with the cloak of kindness, he tells you, 'it is necessary, for the poor must have bread!'

The labourer does his little jobs at home; repairs his garden, improves his house, and sets in order what may have gone wrong during the

week. In his humble circumstances, he supposes, that to labour for his family, can never offend a merciful God; and that to attend the duties of religion, devolves on those who have nothing else to do.

Shoe-makers and tailors, dress-makers and milliners, make little scruple about finishing their work on a sabbath morning, or of sending their apprentices with it through town and country. This necessarily breaks the sabbath, and the servants' rest; learns them a bad custom, which, of their own free will, in turn they are likely to practise; keeps them from the house of God; and many other evils are necessarily attached to this open violation of the Lord's day.

By farmers.---It is a common practice with many farmers to pay their labourers, and to let their work, on the Lord's day morning; or, at best, on the Saturday night; and often at the public house, where a great part of the poor man's wages is spent before he goes home. By this method, the farmer, in addition to beggaring his workmen and breaking the sabbath himself, obliges his servants, the servants' wives, the butcher and shop-keeper, to break

it also. The poor women are almost necessarily engaged all the Lord's day, in buying, baking, boiling, &c., to satisfy their own and their children's wants. As a natural consequence, shops and shambles are opened, and the sellers waiting to vend their respective articles.

In addition to all this, the farmer walks over his estate, and examines his stock and premises, with as easy a conscience as if he had neither soul nor superior. Particularly in the time of harvest, he is busily employed in 'lading asses and bringing in sheaves,' though contrary to an express prohibition of God, which says, 'on the seventh day, in earing time and harvest thou shalt rest.' He tells us his labour is necessary, for it may rain to-morrow. Yes, oh, thou faithless man! and it may be dry; and, above all, thou mayest be dead. But durst thou break a positive precept on a bare supposition? Pause a moment: perhaps thou art as ripe for destruction as the corn, that hangs its golden head over the thirsty land, is ripe for the sickle. It is a fact, that a farmer, in our own neighbourhood, very recently, was actively engaged in ploughing his ground on the Lord's day.

By hair-dressers.---This very numerous class of our community openly violates the Lord's day, as duly as it comes. The hair-dresser and barber are miserably deprived of bodily rest and spiritual improvement; and that with scarcely any colour of necessity. For what necessity is there for a gentleman's face to be so closely shaved, or for any lady's head to be so nicely dressed, on the Lord's day, that both might not be done on the preceding night; or, if absolutely necessary, by themselves in the morning? 'Is it not quite in-conceivable,' says Mrs. Hannah More, 'how a lady's conscience is able to make such nice distinctions, that she would be shocked at the idea of sending for her mantua-maker or milliner, her carpenter or mason, on the Sunday, while she makes no scruple regularly to employ a hair-dresser?'

From the known mischief arising from this custom, a council of divines at Anjou, in 1282, particularly forbade any barber to follow his employment on the Lord's day. Some of them, like many people in a similar situation, tell us, 'that they work against their will, and, that if they could dispense with it, without losing their customers, they certainly would.' But where is the christian magnanimity of these people?

and what are their ideas of divine providence? They court their temporal interest, and fear that the assertion of their religious privileges would be inimical to their temporal welfare. But to such we would say, if your souls are more valuable than your bodies; if heaven is preferable to hell; if you ought to obey God rather than man; risk your temporal emoluments; and know, that they who honour God, by sacrificing their comforts on the altar of affection, shall be honoured by heaven in a way of which you can form no adequate idea.*

By travellers.---Needless travelling on the Lord's day, though very common, is a very ungodly practice. Like all other sins, it comes not alone: but is necessarily attended by several others. Before the man sets off, there is a great deal of bustle in preparing himself, his horse, or his carriage; by the way, every object detaches his mind from serious contemplation; at the end of his journey, the inn, or, more commonly, the private house, is all in confusion, by preparing to receive and to

* See an interesting anecdote in the last lecture.

accommodate the honourable stranger. By this mode of proceeding, the poor servants and horses are kept at their labour all the day long.

‘Visiting and travelling,’ reads a popular work, ‘are enormous profanations of this holy day. Families are thereby robbed of their time; a loss for which no amends can ever be made them. Servants, instead of having leisure to improve themselves in spiritual knowledge, are burdened with additional labour.---And, in a man of any humanity, it must excite many painful sensations, when he reflects how often the useful horse, on that day, experiences all the anguish of hunger, torn sides, and battered knees.’ Nor can these travelling gentry at all compensate for this violation of the day, by attending a place of worship whither they go; they are still guilty for travelling, because they might have heard the gospel at home.

By merchants.---The merchant, broker, or common shop-keeper, is chargeable with the frequent and notorious violation of the Lord’s day. He will occupy a principal part of it in the ware-room or office; he examines his accounts, marks his bales, posts his books, prepares his work for a more speedy execution

on the Monday ; and is contracted in the disposal of his goods, only by the paucity of customers, or the fewness of their wants.--- Neither the commands of God, nor the laws of the land, will constrain him to desist. If the gospel invites him to its feast, he must mind his merchandise; and therefore begs to be excused. If the civil arm be lifted against him, he endeavours to withstand its force, or to evade the stroke.

‘There dwelt men of Tyre also, which brought fish and all manner of ware, and sold them on the sabbath.’ And when the venerable ruler had driven these Tyrian traders from the city, and shut the gates against them, they continued, with daring effrontery, to carry on their traffic in the suburbs. ‘So the merchants and sellers of all kinds of ware, lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, why lodge ye against the walls? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.’ Sunday-sellers, like Ephraim of old, are *tied* to their idols, and scarcely any thing, but the sword of divine wrath, wielded by an avenging God, can cut the threefold cord, and loose these infatuated wretches.

By physicians.---This respectable body of men is formed of members, many of whom notoriously violate the sacred hours of the christian sabbath. Their calling, it is admitted, will sometimes deprive them of attending the house of God. 'If a man ought straightway to pull out his ass or his ox, which falleth into a pit on the sabbath day, how much more on this day ought the sons and daughters of men to be healed of their infirmities!'

But while we make this concession, we are yet constrained to condemn much of their conduct. Do not many medical gentlemen attend their patients on the sabbath day at seasons which interfere with public worship, and commonly more than occasion requires? And do not some of them make their profession a cloak for their almost total disregard of divine ordinances in the church, the family, and the closet? They are admonished of their mortality in every house which they enter, and yet they live as if freed from the fate of the multitude. Against such individuals, we may well take up this proverb, and say, 'physician, heal thyself!'^{*}

* 'It is lawful for physicians and apothecaries to visit the sick on the Lord's day. But their wisdom and piety will require

By lawyers.---The lawyer, too, often employs this holy day in ransacking the records and precedents of antient times. Perhaps, he may muster sufficient modesty to blind his window and to bolt his door; but it is a known fact, that he often spends the greater part of the day in examining and correcting the work of his clerks, posting his books, and managing his extensive correspondence. And while many practisers of the law are thus engaged themselves, they will feel but little scrupulous about engaging their clerks likewise, and will dismiss from their office even their most useful writers, who, in this respect, desire to obey God rather than man. All this many attornies will do with apparent ease of conscience, and as if they intended to evade every court superior to their own. ‘Then answered one of the lawyers and said unto him, thus saying, thou reproachest us also. And Jesus said, woe unto you, ye law-

that, if possible, they contrive their visits, so that they may have time to join in public worship. And care should be taken by them, that their visits on that day be acts of religion and charity, and not made merely as the common labour of their calling, and to get money. There have been several instances of pious physicians, who, sensible of this, have devoted all the fees they received on the Lord's day to charitable uses.’

ORTON.

yers! for ye make laws that ye will not observe, and bind burdens on the shoulders of others, that ye touch not with one of your fingers.'

If search were made for all the lawyers, who religiously observe the christian sabbath, they would be found almost as scarce as 'grapes on the thorn, or figs on the thistle.' Such, indeed, is their conduct, that one might suppose they had a licence to live as they please, and to break the sabbath at will. It is really a source of lamentation, that a class of society so useful, and in general so respectable, should not have the law of the Lord in their heart, as well as the laws of the land in their head; and that they should be, as they too commonly are, the abettors of impiety, and the advocates of a cause so unworthy of their superior ability.

By magistrates.---It is as true as divine veracity, that not one half of our magistrates properly discharge that office with which our country has invested them. On this day they suffer, with impunity, all sorts and degrees of wickedness, They smile at the impious career of the profligate; and sometimes are seen even foremost in the race of the wicked. Why, on the Lord's day, are our streets filled with noise

and confusion, and our fields with crowds of young people, at their unlawful diversions?--- Because our magistrates are asleep, and know not what is doing; or, what is still worse, are the abettors of those practices which they ought to condemn. A good police would suppress the whole. If our magistrates were like those recommended by Jethro to Moses, 'able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness;' our country would, this day, be in a much better condition than it is.

Surely, many of our magistrates must have either assumed an office, for which they are altogether unqualified, or have taken an oath which they too lightly regard. If the British state have enemies; if any set of men render her a double portion of disgrace; if there be any class of people more than others concerned in drawing down divine vengeance upon her; if any aid in perverting her laws, and defacing her unparalleled beauty; they are our acting and subordinate magistrates,---men, who prefer the easy gentleman to the active justice. Pleas of policy they pretend to frame, for the permission of certain moral evils: but are they allowable either by the laws of God, or the codes of our country? Do not common sense, and even

infidelity itself, stand aghast at the shocking apology? But it is made by men too fond of their ease, and who must necessarily condemn themselves by enforcing the laws on others. And, if 'righteousness only exalteth a nation,' these men can have no better claim to the title of loyalty, than to that of christianity;---that is, a title to neither.

By ministers.---With respect to the divine, we can say, however unaccountable it may seem, 'that many a preacher profanes the sabbath. Men break the Lord's day, not merely by committing notorious acts of wickedness, but also by then neglecting the opportunities they possess of benefiting others. And though it is hoped that few instances occur, wherein preachers of the gospel break the sabbath by positive acts of wickedness, yet who would have expected to read, in a recent newspaper, of a reverend gentleman being fined twenty pounds for snaring a hare on a Sunday? Yet this is a fact. Nor is this a solitary instance of preachers publicly profaning it. Many of them have gone so far as to write with infuriated zeal in favour of sports and pastimes on the Lord's day, and miserably to persecute those

champions of the truth who endeavoured to suppress them.

It does not appear quite consistent, moreover, with the office of a minister of Christ, to suffer a number of idle boys, or drunken men, to gingle the parish bells half the day long, to the great annoyance of the neighbourhood, or to allow his clerk or sexton, or any other person, immediately after divine service, to stand up, if not in the church itself, yet in the adjoining yard, to vociferate notices of auctions, frolics, and fairs, to the spiritual injury of all the assembly, especially when he has it in his power, merely by wrinkling his brow, to abolish the whole. But we forbear to enlarge on this delicate subject; we only observe, how very applicable to the purpose is the language of the prophet: ‘her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things; they have shewed no difference between the holy and profane: they have hid their eyes from my sabbath, and I am profaned among them.’

Where, also, have been their examples of piety, their apostolic fire in the pulpit, and their pious deportment out of it? What are their sabbath addresses? often, alas! cold and formal harangues; shewing more solicitude to display

their talents than to profit their hearers. And what can those ministers of religion advance in defence of their conduct, who preach only one short, cold, moral, sermon on the Lord's day? Where is their zeal for the Lord? where is their love for souls? what are their ideas of ministerial responsibility? Their audiences sit, year after year, unproved, uninformed, unblest.

The christian sabbath is profaned---

(4.) BY PEOPLE OF PLEASURE: under which appellation we shall include---

The idle.---See then how the indolent person spends the sabbath! more like a brute than a man. You may often find the farmer's servant lying in the meadow, or basking in the noon-day sun.---The labourer snores on his bed, stretches on his squab, or doses in the family chair; and pleads, that the sabbath was made for *rest*! Others may be found sitting in their garden, or hanging on its walls, saying, 'Oh, what a wearisome time is it!--when will the sabbath be gone?'

Some, in the winter time, sit round the fire or the table all the day long; and in the summer season, they draw their seat to the door;

where they sit, and, according to the common saying, 'smoke their pipe, and crack their joke,' till the shades of night bid them to retire. The people that can work unaccountably hard in the week,---that can rise early and lie down late, and do all with cheerfulness to support their body,---cannot go a hundred yards from home to hear the word of God on the sabbath; nor can some of them fatigue their eyes by reading a chapter in the bible, or even a page in any religious book.

The active.---It is truly wonderful to contemplate the numerous methods that mankind adopt to obtain forbidden delight. Even on the sabbath day one betakes himself to this, and another to that, course of dissipation. They differ in pursuit, but agree in their object. The cockney and the clown are alike pursuing what they term gratification; but which, the longer it is followed, the farther it flies from its breathless pursuers. They run singly and together; they ride in the chariot and on the ass; they go by land and by sea; they exhaust their property, impair their constitution, and endanger their souls, to catch this phantom, this *ignis fatuus* of the brain:

they raise the hue and cry ; they collect the old and the young, and every man fool enough to give them his company, in order to aid them in hunting out, and in running down this singular animal---pleasure.

This is no exaggerated account of the conduct of multitudes on the Lord's day.* It is what we have seen times without number. If you interrogate these bustling gentry, why they thus spend the sabbath, instead of attending the means of grace—they will answer, as did a boy, in a similar situation, a short time since, ' that the sabbath was made for *rest*, and that they will *enjoy* it!' A very ridiculous, but a very common reply.

* ' Some poor pedestrians, whose means refuse
 All ways of riding, but upon their shoes,
 Still on the public roads in throngs repair,
 To see the world, and breathe the country air.
 Through clouds of dust, with weary steps and slow,
 They pant to Hackney, Islington, or Bow ;
 And all around, if but a nook is seen
 Where poplars flourish, or the grass looks green,
 Here thirsty crowds the bustling ale-house fill,
 Quaff porter vile, or spirits viler still ;
 Then staggering home to sleep, they stupid wake,
 To keep St. Monday for St. Sunday's sake.
 Thus swarms of flies on tubs of treacle meet,
 Stick to the cask, and perish in the sweet.'

The rich.---Among people who break the sabbath in pursuit of forbidden delights, we may also enumerate the fashionable world. Often have we seen the pampered proud posting for pleasure to distant villages, and making as free with the day, as if they were lords also of the sabbath. To obtain the stare of the fool, and the cringe of the crowd, they will now and then visit the house of God. Here they feel like beings of a finer make, and of a superior order. The place, they suppose, is graced by their presence, and the preacher obliged by their condescending attendance. To seek equality with them in religious affairs, is a capital crime; and to contradict their monstrous designs, is an unpardonable sin.

But we deviate from our subject. These gentry plunge themselves into all that flood of mirth and revelry, where they often bathe their emaciated frame, and for which they are so deservedly notorious. Though they have six days to display their riches and accomplishments, yet on the Lord's day also they must make as august an exhibition of themselves and their retinue, as possible. 'The ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit,'---the manifestation of genuine piety, which would render them more

pleasing to man, and more acceptable to God,--- they have never worn, they have never sought, they have hardly ever heard of.---Their whole life is a continued demonstration of the truth, 'that when people get rich, they forget God.'

The poor.---It is a common opinion among the poor, that a gracious God will not suffer any of his creatures to have trouble in this life, and misery in the next; and that, act as they like, their poverty and present wretchedness will shield them from the wrath of heaven. Hence they give loose to all their passions, and live as though they had no affliction in this life, and could experience none in the life to come. Look at the lower orders on the Lord's day! How depraved their morals, how irreligious their conduct! Some of them scarcely ever attend the house of God, unless they conceive, that by so doing, they shall oblige some pious people, on whose bounty or kindness they in some measure depend. In general, they reject the offers of mercy, and despise the calls of heaven. 'They have not God in all their thoughts.' They banish every imposing sentiment of piety, and endeavour to copy the manners of the rich;

rejoicing in their dexterity, if they but imagine success.

Nor should we omit to notice those yearly festivities, which are peculiar to the lower orders of the people, in our own immediate neighbourhood. It has been a custom, through time out of mind, for people of all ages to repair to Clifton and other Wells, and to the Giant's Cave, on the first four sabbaths in May, and there to spend them in selling and buying, eating and drinking, playing and fighting; and, in fact, in perpetrating all kinds and degrees of wickedness of which they are capable. This is an open violation of the laws both of heaven and our country; and is calculated to draw down the rod of the civil arm, and the vengeance of an angry God, upon their guilty heads.

The aged.---A wicked old man may lose a relish for his food, but will not for his sinful amusements. His attachment to folly and wickedness grows with his years, becomes ingrafted in his nature, and forms a part of his venerable self. Now he will enjoy the relation of sabbath impiety, in which, through a burden of years, he can no longer engage. He collects the simple striplings around his chair, and to

them relates his youthful follies, and seems to triumph in the recollection of his juvenile misdeeds. Though trembling over the mouth of the tomb, he acts as if he had centuries to live in the world, or as if a long catalogue of crimes were the best passport to heaven.

While the decrepit, too lame to go twenty yards to church, too deaf to hear a sermon, too blind to find his pew, and too ill to be confined an hour, is seen, with all his lameness, blindness, and other bodily diseases, engaging in the pleasures of sin, half-a-dozen miles from home. And the aged matron, 'whose grief-worn cheeks have been a channel to a flood of tears,' brightens up, and, collecting the remnant of her strength, joins the giddy age in their vain diversions; and, perhaps on her last sabbath, forgetting her grey locks and near approach to another world, again and again plays over the follies of her youthful days. Though these people have lived beyond the common age of man, in places where the gospel has been regularly, plainly, and faithfully preached; yet, through their criminal negligence, they are as ignorant of the first principles of salvation, as if they had spent their days in a desert, or among the unchristianized part of mankind.

*The young.**---Through the inexperience of your age, and the temptations to which you are so constantly exposed, you become choaked with the gaieties of life, and run to every excess of riot, demonstrating yourselves to be ‘lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.’ You sometimes attend the sanctuary, but it is often to meet your companions, not to improve your spirits; to make sport, not to please your God. You act as if you had a licence to profane this day, or were not accountable to heaven for its violation. Glee and merriment are all that many of you appear to seek; and if these be found, gospel blessings can be dispensed with. ‘Our young men and maidens rejoice in their youth, and their hearts cheer them in the days of their

* The following is a striking picture of the progress of impiety manifested by those who, in youthful life, profane the Lord’s day. ‘First of all, the young sabbath-breaker, treading under his feet the laws of his Creator, and the injunctions of pious parents, stifling the voice of conscience, gets into vicious company; listens to their vain and foolish, their obscene and profane conversation; catches their impious and daring spirit; imagines it to be witty, clever, brave; first he sips of the intoxicating cup; then drinks and drinks again, till reason is stupified and staggers; conscience is laid asleep; intoxicated imagination is full of evil; passions and lusts are inflamed; and he is ready to rush forth to every flagitious and abominable deed.’—*Rev. W. Kingsbury.*

youth ; they walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, not knowing that for all these things, God will bring them into judgment.'

The Lord's day evening is witness to your ungodly deportment ; you couple together, forming amorous connections ; you assemble in tumultuous parties, and thereby become more daring in your irreligious procedure : for the youth, modest and polite when alone, is immodest and every way insulting, when he gets into bad company. Many young people on this day lose both their virtue and their character, and commence a life of profligacy, which is terminated only by death. Sabbath-breaking is an inlet to every other sin ; and when we see young people profaning it, we prognosticate, that they will be bad members of society when they arrive to manhood. May God, in his goodness, reform your lives, and lead you for mercy to the foot of the cross, 'beneath the droppings of that blood,' which cleanses the sinner from all his sins ! Amen.

HYMN.

Another six days' work is done,
Another sabbath is begun ;
Return, my soul, enjoy thy rest,
Improve the day that God has bless'd.

Come, bless the Lord, whose love assigns
So sweet a rest to wearied minds ;
Provides an ante-past of heaven,
And gives this day the food of seven.

O that our thoughts and thanks may rise
As grateful incense to the skies ;
And draw from heaven that sweet repose,
Which none but he that feels it knows.

In holy duties, let the day
In holy pleasures pass away ;
How sweet a sabbath thus to spend,
In hope of one that ne'er shall end !

STENNETT.

LECTURE V.



THE NON-ADVANTAGE AND EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF SABBATH-BREAKING.

THERE are few people so excessively depraved, as not sometimes to adopt the language of scripture, and to say, ‘ woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.’ The unbeliever, in the height of his merriment, or when attacked by the advocates of truth, may affect a disbelief of present and of future retribution ; yet in the hour of solitude, when conscience will be heard, and when truth rushes into view, he sighs, and rather wishes than believes the doctrine he openly advocates. He has a law written in his heart, which, in opposition to all his endeavours, will solemnly arraign him before the bar of a severe internal judge ;---a judge who extorts a confession, which few but himself is suffered to hear.

Indeed, it would be difficult to find a man so much lost to religion, reason, and common sense, as to affirm it to be his serious and settled opinion, that any one was better, even in this life, for breaking the commands of God. It is true, when you see the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, you may foolishly conclude, that the ungodly have the advantage, and that pious people enjoy not the promise of the present life. The sorrows of the contrite may encourage the ungodly, and the glee of the sinner may stagger the saint; but a moment's consideration would correct the judgment of both: the sinner might have been happy had he been a saint, and the saint might have been miserable had he been a sinner: so that no bad man can reasonably say, his follies and vices make him better; nor a good man, that his principles and piety make him worse.

Vital godliness, in itself, can make no man unhappy: it is full of peace, nor unsuccessful in life; it is a guide to eminence. And wickedness, in itself, can make no man happy: it is pregnant with horror, nor successful; it is the very high road to ruin. To assert otherwise, would be affirming, that a righteous and benevolent

God has established a religion upon earth dishonourable to himself, and injurious to the people for whom he designed it; an idea contrary to scripture, reason, and experience; and sufficiently monstrous to startle and astonish all but the stupid and the blind.* With these general remarks, we shall enter on the subject before us; namely---

III. THE NON-ADVANTAGE AND EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF SABBATH-BREAKING.

First, THE NON-ADVANTAGE OF SABBATH-BREAKING: wherein we shall endeavour to prove, 'that nothing radically good or considerably advantageous can be obtained, either by the nation at large, or by any individual in particular, through any mode of violating the sabbath day.' And---

(1.) *In reference to the nation.*---Here we may lay down, as an infallible maxim, the sentiment of that celebrated statesman, Mr.

* 'I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; *who hath hardened himself, and hath prospered?*' Job ix. 2-4.

FOX: 'THAT WHICH IS MORALLY WRONG, CAN NEVER BE POLITICALLY RIGHT.' The pure principles of the christian religion are so consonant, and so closely connected, with the well organization, the lasting comfort, and the advancing glory, of a country, that the violation of the former is a sure presage of the latter's destruction; and the disregard of evangelical rules, a certain excision of almost every thing that adorns society, and prospers a nation.

If there is an order in providence; if there is a jealous God that regardeth human conduct; if there is a superior Being, who will reward virtue and punish iniquity; that national proceeding which militates against the genius of the gospel, will not, can not, be for the advancement of any people whatsoever: it is so repugnant to common sense, and so contrary to the revelation of God, that we cannot for a moment admit it as a truth.

The temporal blessings promised to the children of Israel were to be realized only by their sincere and constant regard to the equitable rules of God's moral government.^a And, to

^a Deut xi. 27. Josh. v. 6.

bring this sentiment to bear on the doctrine under consideration, we learn that the prosperity of the jewish nation almost entirely depended on their keeping holy the sabbath of the Lord.^b If, then, God is the same now as formerly; if he regards the christian sabbath, as much as he did the jewish; which none but the ignorant will doubt; we may very reasonably infer, that the prosperity of our land depends more on the sanctification of the Lord's day, than upon the bravery of our soldiers, the wisdom of our rulers, the extent of our territories, or the richness of our mercantile traffic.

For the truth of the doctrine we maintain, we can appeal to the reason and common sense of mankind. Let the 'nobles' of Britain say, what national advantage can possibly arise from any mode of breaking the christian sabbath. Is our land more honourable and flourishing; is our government more sound in its constitution; are our senators more wise, our warriors more brave, our arts more refined, or our commerce more beneficial; are our peasantry more industrious, our fields more fertile, or our

^b Jeremiah xvii. 19—27.

flocks more productive; does providence smile more upon us, and are our efforts crowned with greater success; *because* we violate the Lord's day at any time, or in any form whatsoever? Is there any extra ease obtained by any rank in society; are we furnished with more of the necessaries or luxuries of life; or is there any real or lasting good obtained in any way, or by any part of our country, through the profanation of the sabbath?

Assuredly, to these inquiries every virtuous noble, and every pious and sensible person, throughout all the gradations of society, would promptly answer in the negative. If, then, vice is not temporally advantageous; or, if virtue be as beneficial as its opposite principles; certainly every one should prefer walking in the (alas! unbeaten) paths of virtue. And, if these sentiments are correct, why is there not an immediate suppression of every evil of this nature, which it becomes the civil arm to suppress?

But, it is to be feared, that many of our countrymen and magistrates labour under the mistaken idea, that certain modes of sabbath-breaking are, in some way or other, productive

of considerable good to the nation. Let us, then, descend to particulars; and see whether their judgment or ours be more agreeable, not only with christian principles, but also with sterling sense and consistent policy. And we apprehend, that the following brief statements will in general be found correct, and will prove all that is incumbent on us at present; which is, to shew you, that no considerable pecuniary advantage can by any means arise to our country, through the sufferance of any of those moral evils that were recently enumerated.

Let us ever recollect, then, when we speak of a well-organized kingdom, such as our own, that it forms, as it were, a perfect body of itself; and is so constituted, and one part of it is so dependent on another, or so connected with it; that any act of kindness which it does, is done to itself; and every injury which it does, is done to itself; every wound, even in its numerous extremities, is felt by all the more vital parts; and every kindness done to the heart, is diffused through all the members of this political body.

Seeing, also, that the poorer orders, and the working classes of society, are by far the majority of our population, and that the tide of

national happiness will always ebb or flow, as they shall rise or fall in the scale of fortune; it is evident, that as their affairs prosper or decline, our country may be designated successful or unhappy; and that whatever conduces to their distress or prosperity, may be justly denominated a national curse, or a national blessing. If, therefore, any form of Sabbath-breaking can be proved of no advantage to the poor, it can be proved of no advantage to the country at large; and if it can be proved detrimental to their welfare, it must be considered a national evil.

Observe, again, that in estimating the evil or benefit of an action, we are not to consider merely its immediate result, but every consequence that is likely to ensue; and to follow the chain of dependency as far as it will conduct us. For example :---if, by any mode of breaking the sabbath, the shop-keeper, the landlord, or the farmer, should reap a considerable immediate advantage; yet, if through this evil, a dozen poor families were reduced to poverty, and thrown on the parish, which those people have to uphold; so far from being gainers, they would in the end be considerable losers.

And, if we expand the sentiment, and em-

brace the nation, it will be found equally consistent; for though, in consequence of buying and selling on the sabbath, the revenue could be increased for the moment; yet, if our peasantry become idle, turn robbers, fill our prisons, and put our country to a vast expence in their prosecution; or, if our factories should be injured for want of sales, so that the employers should not be able to pay the duty laid on their goods; or, if the farmer were unable to vend his corn and cattle, and consequently unable to pay his taxes; our country, so far from being a gainer, would lose considerably by this moral evil; our whole system would be shaken and unnerved, and the bonds that should bind every part in its place would be slackened; and, instead of being enabled to act with ease and vigour, it would be, like Sampson without his hair, both fragile and foolish.*

* ' Old Egypt, Tyre, and Greece, and Rome, have felt
 How Lux'ry's flame can public virtues melt.
 First private worth gives way, and feebly falls;
 Then bold corruption saps the city walls.
 Thus nations rise, grow rich, grow proud and vain,
 Then sink to want and ignorance again.
 May England, timely warn'd, the ruin shun,
 Preserve her rank, nor be by fools undone.'

It may be proper still further to premise respecting the providence of heaven over the nations of the earth. We have assumed as acknowledged, the superintendance of God over every national, domestic, and personal concern: and though few will openly deny our premises, yet the majority of mankind conduct their affairs in such a manner, as if the Almighty had nothing to do either with the world, or with them. Hence follow the greater part of those evils, which we witness, or suffer, or deplore. Hence, among a certain class of society, there is so much religion in public, and so little in the privacy of family retirement and personal solitude. Hence, the omission of a thousand religious actions---we shall be righteous unobserved. ‘Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not; wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?’^a Hence, the perpetration of numberless crimes---we may rebel with impunity. ‘How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?’^b

To the want of a thorough belief in the providence of God, we may trace our national

^a Is. lviii. 3.

^b Job. xxii. 13.

crimes and our national calamities. And from the same source, flow those streams of folly and affliction, which corrupt and embitter domestic life. Were the rulers of our land fully persuaded, that whatever they enforce or suffer, contrary to the revealed will of God, must, in the end, be injurious to that cause they aim to advance; we should not have to establish the non-advantage of violating the fourth commandment. And, if less communities and individuals were conscious that they are always acting under the eye of the great God, and that whatsoever tends to displease him, will terminate in their own confusion, and to their own disadvantage; we should not have had the unpleasant task of developing the follies enumerated in the preceding part of our subject.

But, to convince you on general principles, and from the uniform conduct of God, that national sins, however speciously committed; and personal crimes, however secretly perpetrated, will be of no advantage to the nation, or to any individual concerned; permit us to raise and establish the following propositions:---

National sins, unless universally deplored, and generally reformed, will certainly be followed by some public and general calamity.---

Such was the case with the Antediluvians, the Canaanites, and the Chaldeans.

There is a possibility that a people the most wealthy, the most wise, the most powerful, and the best organized, may sink into poverty, weakness, ignorance, and contempt---as was the case with the Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, and others.

No kingdom or community of people, however beloved of God, and peculiarly blessed with mercies, will be suffered to break his commandments, or to abuse his favours with impunity.---Witness the kingdom of Israel in its numerous sins and calamities, and the eastern churches in their corruptions and chastisements.

The judgments brought upon any nation for its iniquities, however fortuitous in their appearance, or by whatever hand they may be inflicted, are all from the Lord;---as you will perceive by referring to the following scriptures: Ex. xxi. 13. Prov. xix. 21. xxi. 1. Amos iii. 6. *et passim*.

God has nowhere intimated that he will be more favourable to one sinful people than to another, when their advantages and their crimes are alike.

It has never been proved by all that has been written or said, that the violation of any one of

the ten commandments, in any manner, or to any extent, has rendered any people, considered either in a social or solitary capacity, more rich, more powerful, more wise, or more happy, than they would have been had they observed it. It devolves on those who assert the contrary to establish it. We shall leave the application of these positions to the judgment of our respective hearers.

After these preliminary observations, we proceed to examine the several particulars before us. We will commence with the *vending of goods* on the Lord's day. And here, we affirm it as our serious and settled opinion, that no considerable extra advantage, or revenue, can by any means arise to the government, in consequence of any articles sold on the sabbath. For, first, we do not imagine that any individual takes out a licence for selling on Sundays, who, if then prohibited, would not take it out for the rest of the week: nor does it cost him more, because he then takes the advantage of acting under it: so that nothing at all can arise through any extra number, or any greater price of licences. Again, goods sold on the Lord's day pay no more duty to government than

similar goods sold in the week: hence, there is no advantage arising from greater duties. And if the articles usually sold on the Lord's day, were not then disposed of, they would have a much brisker sale in the ensuing week; or should these goods lie unsold for a while, yet other commodities would be disposed of during the six days, that would add equally to the public purse.

For, observe, that the people who are most, and, we may say, only accustomed to purchase things of any description on the sabbath, are the poor and the working classes of society, who have but a certain small quantity of money to spend during the seven days; and if they cannot lay it out on the Lord's day, they will certainly do it on the other six. And, if the money earned in a week be expended in a week, it is of no matter to the country, whether it be laid out on the first, or on any other day.

But if, in consequence of a prohibition of sales on the sabbath, any individuals should save a certain portion of their income, usually expended on that holy day; yet what would become of the money thus accumulated? The possessors would probably put it into a savings' bank, or lend it to their neighbour to extend his business,

or give it to objects of charity; in all which cases it would be kept in rapid circulation, and as, in some way or other, every article of goods is taxed, would be making its way to the head of affairs. For in a mercantile country like this, few people will lay by their money in coffers, when they can obtain five pounds per centum per annum for keeping it in circulation.

But to suppose the worst that can take place. Should any individuals, (and their number will always be very inconsiderable,) in consequence of not being able on the Lord's day to expend their money in goods subject to duty, hoard up, for a few years, the trifling sums now usually expended; yet, what would be the baneful consequences? Why, in a little time, this sum might save them and their family from poverty and the parish, which would be a great and a general blessing; or voluptuous heirs might squander it away in such a manner, as to send the major part of it to the fountain of affairs, with considerable velocity; or frugal legatees might so manage its expenditure, as to bless the nation at large, by benefiting their neighbourhood in particular.

Hence it is clear, that upon the whole, our government can reap but little emolument, in

consequence of tolerating the sale of any kind of goods on the sabbath day.

The arguments which establish the non-advantage of vending common articles on the sabbath, will apply with equal force to the *sale of liquor*, and the *circulation of newspapers*; seeing similar people are, for the most part, the purchasers: and government cannot be worse off by receiving any sums of money, as duty for the common necessaries of life sold in the week, than if the same had accrued as the tax of spirits, which injure the body; and of newspapers, which poison the mind; sold and circulated on the Lord's day.*

* Since the first edition of these lectures was printed, a bill has been brought into parliament for the suppression of Sunday newspapers; but it was rejected without a division, on the ground that the measure, if adopted, would considerably diminish the public revenue. From the nature of our remarks, it will appear, that the principle on which the bill was rejected is very unsound; and that the revenue would not be considerably diminished by the suppression of Sunday papers.

Besides, in the formation of laws, is the public revenue the only thing to be consulted? are the commands of God, the natural rights, the moral department, and the eternal welfare of men, not to be taken into consideration? Were our senators, like the assistants of Moses, 'able men, such as fear God, men of truth, *hating covetousness,*' the morality of

With regard to *driving cattle*, and *holding vestries*, on the sabbath, it would be superfluous, and even ridiculous to contend, that the nation is not in the least degree benefited by them. No person, we conceive, ever contended to the contrary. If there were any advantage, it must arise to the drover, in the diminution of travelling expences, or to the parish-officers, in the saving of time. We shall, therefore, concisely examine and reply to the pleas usually adduced in favour of *ordinary travelling*, and of *drilling our military* on the christian sabbath.

The emoluments, then, arising to the nation, in consequence of coaches, curricles, and carts, packets, boats, and barges, running and rowing on this holy day, appear to us very inconsiderable. Now, as no person, it is presumed, will take out a licence for a servant, horse, coach, &c. the more because he is suffered to use them on the sabbath; as all the king's horses and chariots; all private cattle in

the people, and the honour of Jehovah, would be consulted before the gratification of our appetites, or the replenishing of our exhausted coffers.

government coaches; all horses and carriages kept for private use; and all boats, barges, packets, &c. may travel on the Lord's day, without paying any extra duty for it; seeing, also, that the horses and carriages which travel on the sabbath, subject to mile duty, (which only can be pleaded), are mostly supported by the lower or working classes of society, who would otherwise expend all their money in the ensuing week, on the necessaries or luxuries of life, all subject to duty: seeing, moreover, that no extra taxed servants, horses, or carriages, are required for travelling seven days than for six: it may be fairly inferred, that government can increase its revenues but very little from any thing of this sort tolerated on the Lord's day.

It may be urged, that the permission of these practices is very accommodating to the public. To an ungodly public it may be accommodating; but it is so merely in the same manner as poison is accommodating to a man who wishes to terminate his own existence; but with which no man of even common humanity would knowingly furnish him. Yet, to a religious public, these coaches, &c. are not so accommodating as many suppose. The pious man,

who is obliged to commence a long journey on the latter part of the week, and who would thankfully rest any where on the road, rather than travel on the sabbath, is often necessitated to go forward, and to spend the Lord's day, amidst the foolish jargon of the passengers, and the oaths of drunken guards and besotted coachmen.

It is again pleaded, that by suffering mail coaches to travel on the sabbath, the business of a numerous class of society is forwarded a whole day; and which, in many cases, may be of considerable importance to the individuals concerned. To such we reply; if your letters, bills, parcels, &c. were always detained on the road during the Lord's day, you would feel no more inconvenience from any delay in the reception of letters, &c. than you do at present. Every man of business would be under a similar restraint; and a general embargo would remove any burden that might otherwise rest on a restrained individual. Besides, your correspondents would send off your papers, parcels, &c. a day earlier; or you would quietly account on receiving them a day later; and all without the least stagnation of trade, or loss in your business.

The last practice against which we contend, as being of no benefit to the nation, is *drilling our military* on the sabbath. Here we remark, that no pecuniary advantage can by any means arise to the country in consequence of any thing of this sort carried on during the sabbath-day, seeing that the soldiers are paid for their attendance then, the same as for any other time. And, surely, no person will betray his ignorance so grossly as to argue, that there is any national advantage in playing the band through the streets, and in collecting an insufferable concourse of people to hear it with astonishment on the sabbath of the Lord.

It is, however, contended, first, 'that those soldiers are regularly marched to church every Lord's day morning; and that the spectators are usually drawn after them.' But what are the soldiers prepared to hear, after several hours of parade; or what are the rabble likely to learn, who go merely to see the soldiers, and to accompany the music? Both must be totally unfitted for any serious contemplation whatever.

Again, say others, 'if these men had not been engaged in the field, they might have spent the day as badly in the public house.' True, this might have been the case; and it

might not; and are we, therefore, to make men really sin, because there exists a probability of their doing it without our assistance---or are we to lead men into one sin to keep them out of another---or to do evil that good may come---or to sin ourselves to keep others from sinning? How absurd! even supposing the objection to be well founded: but it is not. Drilling does not prevent the soldiers from getting drunk on the sabbath; and that too, at the worst hour of the day. And, indeed, they are more likely to be intoxicated after a drill than without it, as observation too well establishes.

It is further objected, 'that the circumstances of the nation may require it.' If so, go on; be loyal, save your country! works of necessity are to be done at any time. This necessity, however, has seldom occurred; and, therefore, cannot be pleaded to support a general practice. Three days in a week, says the legislature, are sufficient to train men to their duty; hence there exists no occasion for drilling on the sabbath.

It is urged, moreover, 'that the saving of time is a serious object to the nation.' And equally serious ought to be the salvation of

our souls. But this saving of time is not quite so important as our objectors imagine. In a country tolerably advanced in civilization and science, employment is scarcer than men; and if a day in every week were taken from those appointed for labour, all our work would not fully occupy our population during the five that remained.

Finally, it is said, 'that the law allows any man, upon pleading scruples of conscience, to withdraw from the field.' This privilege, however, is a tacit acknowledgment, that no such necessity exists for drilling on the sabbath. And observe, that the state, with all her maternal regard, not only suffers her children to break the law of God with impunity, but even demands a solemn oath, stating a religious disapproval before she will suffer them not to break it. Rather, should not human laws support the divine? And surely our country should hold forth no temptations to induce the subject to violate the commands of heaven: for such incitements certainly exist. The man who, from religious scruples, leaves his comrades, will invariably incur their ridicule; and his officers, often, alas! irreligious striplings, condemned by his superior sanctity, will, one

way or other, make him pay well for his puritanical piety.

Upon the whole, it must be evident, that no considerable pecuniary profits can possibly arise to our government through any mode of violating the sabbath. And as for any other advantage, in any other way, there cannot be the most trifling.

But to press the argument still further, and to speak to your conscience as well as to your judgment. Suppose the nefarious practices, which we formerly exposed, did enrich our land; and that in consequence of adhering to these ungodly maxims, our sovereign, like Solomon, could render silver and gold as plenteous as the stones in the street; could he obtain the homage of every earthly potentate, and sway his sceptre over the spacious globe; or, if he could furnish our island with every luxury, and make it more lovely than the garden of the Lord, would these temporal blessings compensate for the spiritual evils attending breaches of the divine law? And have civil rulers nothing to do with the spiritual good of the people? can christian legislators conscientiously tolerate practices subversive of peace on earth and happiness for ever; or could that be a well

organized constitution which involved no concern for the chief end of man, or for its own comfortable existence?*

These remarks have been occasioned by the observations of a respectable magistrate, (not singular in his sentiments,) who was recently talking of the expediency of suffering certain unchristian acts on the sabbath day; and also to prove that those people, who wish to suppress moral evils in the nation, cannot consistently be considered inimical to the constitution, but that they, on the contrary, are its best friends and most reasonable supporters.

Permit us here to pause, and make one or two

* 'The principal object of every wise and paternal government being the conservation of the moral character of its people, as involving both their individual interests and the general security, it is apprehended, that no addition to the revenue, of whatever extent, can ever counterbalance the serious injury which accrues to the nation from thus preventing the advantages of its religious institutions, and exciting a spirit of impiety, insubordination, and discontent, alike injurious to the interests of piety, and hostile to established order. And it may be further observed, under this head, that if there were fewer temptations to profane the sabbath, a very considerable saving would probably accrue to the public, from the diminution in the number of criminal prosecutions, and a reduction in the serious expence at present attending the administration of justice, and the transportation and imprisonment of offenders.'—*Evang. Mag.* vol. xxviii. p. 232.

reflections. Were the public and our governors but aware of how much they are indebted to God for the institution of the sabbath, they would be more concerned for its regular and due observance: were men to esteem the sabbath for the mercies which it has afforded them, in proportion as they esteem even their dogs for some generous action, we should not now have to advance motives for its proper sanctification; but rather might have to check, if possible, a too scrupulous attention to its various avocations.

Why are we not now, like our forefathers two thousand years ago, without the benefits of civil and social life?---Why are we not roaming through the wide-spreading forests, with painted skin and savage aspect, in quest of our foes, and yet trembling for fear?---Why are not the caves our dwelling, the cliffs our refuge, and the rocks our defence?---Why are not our cities a wilderness---our meadows fields of war--our employment butchery---and our pleasure drinking the blood, and feasting on the carcasses of our slaughtered friends?---Why are we not without all those blessings which cheer us in trouble, support us in weakness, and supply us when in need?---Why are we not without ‘the knowledge of God and of his Christ,’ the means of

grace and the hope of glory?---Why? Because we have a sabbath.

To the sabbath the poor are indebted for their peace, and the rich for their plenty. This institution has produced order in society, softness of manners, and general tranquillity: it has raised a peaceful cottage over the poor man's head, and furnished it with the necessaries of life; it has afforded the middle ranks of our population the happiness of sitting at ease, neither sinking with wealth, nor feeble with poverty: it has raised a palace and a throne for the monarch: it has filled the former with all that could charm the senses or gratify desire; and it has surrounded the latter with glories which rival in splendour the morning sun shining through bespangled clouds: and now, without the sabbath, we should soon return to our primitive barbarity and original wretchedness. The poor man would lose his peace, the merchant his ease, and the monarch his authority: and in proportion as we misemploy this sacred day, in the very same proportion shall we return to former manners and to former miseries.

And though all this is universally known, and as universally acknowledged, yet, wonderful to think, we have to heap argument upon argu-

ment, and motive upon motive, to constrain mankind to observe it at all! We have to persuade them by all that is dear, and to urge them by all that is dreadful; we have, in the name of God, to intreat and to threaten, to beseech and to command, a due observance of this holy day; and after all we can do, they will profane it themselves, and teach others to do the same.—But we must return to our arguments.

(2.) IN REFERENCE TO INDIVIDUALS.—
And here we shall be short. *Let us interrogate the ungodly professor.* And pray, sir, are your inattention to the affairs of your soul on the sabbath, and the inconsistency of your conduct, in professing a religion which you consider divine, whose dictates you seldom obey, of any advantage to you as a christian or as a man?

Are you more like the Son of God; more like his apostles; more like the venerable reformers of the christian church; or more like what you wish your neighbours to esteem you, through violating the sacred moments of the christian sabbath?

Are you more versed in religious truths; do you enjoy more of the consolations of the gospel; are you more devout in the week; more

respected by the good, and rendered a greater blessing to the bad, through your criminal remissness of duty on this blessed day?

Or, to look forward, are you better prepared to enjoy prosperity without elation; or to sustain the afflictions of life with christian fortitude; to walk through the valley of the shadow of death; to stand before the tribunal of Christ, and to be with God for ever; because, contrary to your pretensions, and to the dictates of your mind, you pay little regard to the Lord's day? Ah! what says conscience?---let it be heard: 'slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; an idle soul shall suffer hunger; and woe to them that are at ease in Zion!'

Question the irreligious head of a family.---And have your domestic frolics---your inattention to the spiritual welfare of your family---your neglect of private and of public duties, on the Lord's day, been productive of personal or domestic benefit?

Are you better yourself, and are your pleasures, as a master and a parent, more numerous and refined, because you misimprove the sacred hours of the christian sabbath?

Are your servants more faithful and obedient;

do they esteem you more, and serve you better; are their obligations to you as a master more righteously discharged, because you allow them to violate the sabbath, by running to every excess of riot, and by committing all manner of mischief?*

Are your children more affectionate and docile; do they grow up more like what you would wish to see them; are they likely to support you more tenderly and stedfastly, when you shall bow with weakness and tremble with age; are they greater favourites of yourself and your friends, because you suffer them to break this holy day?

Is your house more the retreat of peace, and the scene of prosperity; more 'like the family of faith and the household of God;' have you more of the divine presence, and a richer profusion of his blessings within your domestic circle, because you keep not the sabbath from polluting it? No! you ingenuously reply, 'the Lord will pour out his fury upon the heathen that know him not, and upon the families that call not on his name.'

* It was an observation of bishop Reynolds: 'Take care that your servants do their duty to God, and God will take care that they do their duty to you.'

Examine the man of business.---Does he realize any extra emolument by any mode of sabbath-breaking which he may adopt? He doubts---he conceives it possible---he supposes that he may. But to us it seems extremely improbable. For, in the first place, it cannot be *proved* that any person ever did, all things considered, realize a single extra farthing by unnecessarily attending to his ordinary business on the sabbath.

Though individuals of this description may have accumulated handsome fortunes, and even rolled in luxury; yet who can say that they might not have obtained an equal portion of this world's goods, and even a larger one, had they not laboured on the Lord's day? Men of similar professions, and with less favourable prospects in life, who have hallowed the sabbath, have increased in riches as much, and more than they. And hence, their gathering of wealth is not necessarily ascribed to their attending their business on the christian sabbath.

In the next place, to suppose that sabbath-breakers have the advantage of men who conscientiously keep the day, and to whom the promise of the present life is made, is contrary to our ideas of the divine goodness, and to

the tenor of God's holy word. For though the sun shines alike upon the just and upon the unjust; who ever supposed that his rays were more advantageous to the wicked, because of their wickedness, than to the righteous, because of their righteousness! Examine the history of the jewish and christian churches, and the contrary will every where be manifest.

You believe that all things are under the ruling providence of heaven; and surely it is diametrically opposed to your ideas of providence, that men should be rewarded with real blessings for their hateful wickedness. To him, says the scripture, that keepeth God's commandments, 'there is a great reward;' and to those who keep them not, it says, 'cursed shall they be in their basket, and in their store.'

And, finally, the supposition is disproved by experience. It has been found, after a minute and impartial investigation of the business, that those people who make a practice of breaking the fourth commandment, by either toil or traffic, do not get forward in the world so comfortably, nor so speedily, as the conscientious man, who then refrains from all kinds of ordinary business.

For if the sabbath-breaker does, by his labour, realize some considerable sums for the moment, yet it has been almost invariably observed, that they have been lost nearly as soon as obtained. For instance, he has become a drunkard or a glutton, and so has spent his money; or he has had a rebellious and prodigal family, who have wasted it 'among harlots in riotous living;' or some stagnation in business has peculiarly affected him, and he has fallen from the summit of plenty; or he has contracted some bad habit, which has deprived him of his all, and sometimes of his liberty and life, and left him to the wrath of an angry God.

So that, as observation fully demonstrates, nothing valuable can be procured, nor any thing good retained, by breaking the fourth commandment. 'Who has hardened himself against the Lord and has prospered?' if any such people are to be found; 'the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.'

Notice the pleasure taker.---Tell us also, O thou man of pleasure! if any of thy sabbath rounds of dissipation, if any of thy frantic sports, if any of thy banquetings and revellings, have added to the stock of thy felicity. After a

sabbath, desecrated by such amusements, hast thou reclined upon thy pillow, and felt a conscience more easy, and more void of offence towards God and man, than if thou hadst passed the day in innocence and devotion, and in training thy untutored soul for a better world?

Yea, we may ask thee, if in the height of thy recreations, thou hast felt as comfortable as when seated in the sanctuary, and listening to the word of life? Thy faithful conscience must give a negative reply to all these enquiries. ‘The ways of wisdom *only* are ways of pleasantness; and the paths of piety *only* are the paths of peace.’

We have thus briefly, and, it is hoped, satisfactorily proved, that no considerable pecuniary benefit, nor any other kind of advantage, can possibly arise to the nation, or to any individuals, through any mode of violating the Lord’s day. May the sentiments adduced, have such an influence upon your minds and manners, that for the future you may so ‘remember the sabbath-day, as to keep it eminently holy!’ Amen.

HYMN.

Sweet is the day of sacred rest ;
 No mortal cares shall seize my breast :
 O may my heart in tune be found,
 Like David's harp, of solemn sound !

My heart shall triumph in my Lord,
 And bless his works, and bless his word ;
 Thy works of grace, how bright they shine !
 How deep thy counsels ! how divine !

Yes, I shall share a glorious part,
 When grace has well refin'd my heart ;
 And fresh supplies of joy are shed,
 Like holy oil, to cheer my head.

Sin, my worst enemy before,
 Shall vex my eyes and ears no more ;
 My inward foes shall all be slain,
 Nor Satan break my peace again.

Then shall I hear and see and know,
 All I desir'd, or wish'd, below ;
 And every power find sweet employ
 In that eternal world of joy.

WATTS.

LECTURE VI.



THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IN our last discourse, we endeavoured to put to silence the ignorance of those foolish men, who contend that certain modes of sabbath-breaking are productive of national or individual advantage. Our object, at present, is to shew that violating the Lord's day, so far from being advantageous, is highly injurious, as the words of our text fully demonstrate: 'Did not your fathers thus; and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath day.'

As in the following discourse, for the better elucidation of our subject, and the more firm establishment of our several positions, we intend to produce practical proof of the fatal consequences of sabbath impiety, by narrating several calamitous events; it may be proper here to remark, that, though innumerable

instances are daily occurring, every way applicable to our purpose; yet, for reasons easily conceived, we shall not meddle with modern disasters; but shall direct your attention to some striking, though hackneyed, accounts of an earlier date.

As it is possible, that some present may be disposed to question the veracity of the following anecdotes, or to ascribe their occurrence to causes foreign to our subject; we now assure you, that they are selected from authors of the first distinction, and are as worthy of our belief, as any historical fact whatever; and that many great and good men, believing in the superintending providence of God, and persuaded that nothing occurs without some special design, have referred them to the causes to which they will be ascribed in the present lecture.* But not to detain you

*

————— ‘Howsoe’er

We revel in our guilt, or careless scan
 Our present warfare, and our future weal;
 There is a God, who will not, cannot, still
 Bear with our follies; but (with awful signs,
 Preface of retribution) will step forth
 And claim regard; make manifest his power;
 Declare his lasting enmity to sin,
 And vindicate each tittle of his word.’

COCKIN’S RURAL SABBATH, b. iv.

with any further preamble; we proceed to consider---

Secondly, THE EVIL CONSEQUENCES OF SABBATH BREAKING: and these are visible---

(1.) *In our injured country*.---Britons, by their christian benevolence towards idolatrous nations, are, by the recipients of their bounty, considered a virtuous and godly people. We are sending the bible and our missionaries to almost every part of the globe. Now this, by the heathens in general, is considered a *national* work; and, doubtless, the idea which they form of us is, that we are the most religious people under heaven; and that, among other evidences of our piety, the Lord's day, of which we say so much to them, is properly observed by ourselves.

But at length, either on business or pleasure, they pay our country a visit; and, like Moses approaching the burning bush, first step on British ground with the profoundest reverence. They mark our manners; they watch every motion of the multitude; and are greatly surprised. But they say within themselves, their sabbath is a holy day, and on that their superior piety will be visible; they, therefore, again

look about on the sabbath ; but they are again disappointed ; and, if possible, are still more surprised. Soon, however, they are led to correct their ill-formed judgment. And, doubtless, they conceive that our nation, generally considered, is as much pagan as their own, and that the sins, which they saw in embryo at home, are to be found in perfection here.

With these unfavourable impressions they return ; they tell their countrymen what they have seen and heard ; they despise us as a land of hypocrites ; our bibles and our missionaries are treated with contempt ; and by these means our sabbath impiety arrests the progress of our pious efforts to save the world. What was once said of Jerusalem, may now be said of Britain : ‘ the adversary saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.’

Again, if sound morals are conducive to a country’s happiness ; if ‘ PRIVATE VIRTUE IS A PUBLIC GOOD ;’ if the genius of the gospel is really adapted to advance our national welfare ; surely it is the greatest impolicy to suffer the Lord’s day to be so notoriously profaned.*

* ‘ One of the kings of France (but which I do not now recollect), issued an edict, that any one who refused, in a

By neglecting religion, men render themselves not only unable, but likewise unwilling, to discharge the duties which they owe to their king and their country. The scriptures have united religion and loyalty :---‘ fear God, and honour the king.’ Industry and devotion :---‘ six days shalt thou labour, but on the seventh shalt thou rest ;’ and that which separates them; will materially injure them all. A neglect of religion will turn all our aims into channels of selfishness, and make us unfriendly both towards God and his creatures. He that fears the Lord will, for that very reason, obey magistrates ; while the man that breaks his bonds of obligation to the former, will not be very scrupulous in observing his duty towards the latter.

Besides, are we not, like the Asiatic churches, in danger of becoming pagan ourselves? Might not the Almighty easily effect such a change?

certain particular, to break the ensuing sabbath, should be immediately dismissed the king’s service. The consequence was, that all his dependants (excepting three) were found at the amusement. On the morrow he dismissed those hirelings who violated the Lord’s day, saying, that ‘ those who will serve their God most conscientiously, will serve me most faithfully.’—UPTON.

Hear, ye rulers of the realms! hear, ye loyal sabbath-breakers! ‘Hear this, O ye that say, when will the new moon be gone, and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? &c. Shall not the land tremble for this? I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation. I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water; but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even unto the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.’^a ‘Was not this prediction recently fulfilled in a neighbouring nation? The French, prior to the revolution, awfully profaned the sabbath; and what was the result? Why, by a just retaliation of divine providence, they lost it!’

Have we, as Englishmen, any reason to expect more favour from God than he shewed to his chosen people the Jews, when our sins are as aggravating as theirs? and that such is the case at this time, none, acquainted with the bible and our country, can deny. Go then, in imagination, visit the wilderness, and see

^a Amos viii. 4—12.

what the Hebrews felt, or what God threatened to inflict upon them for violating his holy days. ' My sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; that I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness; that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries. I gave them also statutes which were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.'^b Where is the British christian, whose affections kindle with a country's love, that is not grieved for British guilt, and alarmed for Britain's safety!

Can you even imagine your nation disgraced, its population vitiated, and its churches empty, without the deepest sorrow and distress? You love your country, you feel its happiness, and its misery your own: you can individually adopt the language of Cowper, and say---

' England, with all thy faults, I love the still—
My country! and while yet a nook is left,
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constained to love thee.'

^b Ezekiel xx. 13—25.

Many of you are descended from ancestors who bled to support its honours and to preserve its rights; and you yourselves have invariably professed the warmest attachment to your king and the constitution; and your professions are sincere. Suffer us, then, to intreat you, by your relation to the pious, loyal, and mighty dead; by all the happiness you enjoy as subjects of the British government; by all your patriotic feelings and professions, never to injure your country, never to invoke the wrath of heaven upon it by profaning that day, the due observance of which, in any land, is a bulwark around it, impregnable as the walls of heaven, and the happiness and the glory of its numerous population.

(2.) *In afflicted families.*---How many streams that damp the pleasures of domestic life, may be traced to the poisonous source of sabbath-breaking! It may be laid down as a general maxim, that when the sabbath is profaned in a family, there will be but little happiness found among its members. When we enter a house, and see dirt, discord, and distress together, we commonly conclude, that the people are sabbath-breakers. We have found these evils

so often associated, in regard to persons of this description, that we hesitate not to say, the above inference will generally be found correct. This observation has been confirmed by the testimony of several pious gentlemen in the metropolis, who have made it their business to visit the poor, and to enquire into their conduct and circumstances.

Indeed, it appears to be the determination of God, that those who deny him one day in seven, shall have but little enjoyment on the remaining six. The families that waste the morning in bed, that attend more to fashion than to religion, or more to this world than to the next, on the sabbath, will unavoidably experience one of the following evils: ' they must either remain ignorant of religious truth, and consequently of social and relative obligations; or must squander their property, and by that means, especially if their walk through life be of the humbler kind, become pennyless in the following week: and poverty, thus invited, will reluctantly leave the family, or suffer peace to have any part of its domains.

Besides, the baneful influence of some parents' irreligious example on the minds and

manners of their children and domestics, is truly affecting. Their offspring rise into life untutored and unfitted for any creditable station in society ; and, being unestablished in religious principles, they yield to the force of temptation, and rush into evils which often hurry them to some tragic end, and ‘bring down the grey hairs of their parents with sorrow to the grave.’

Moreover, by suffering your children and servants to have their swing of liberty on the Lord’s day evenings, so many unhappy, and often so many unlawful, connexions are formed, which issue in floods of affliction to the youthful parties more immediately concerned, and entail evils on their posterity, from which many a generation cannot properly be freed.

Oh, ye heads of families, suffer the word of exhortation. When the Lord gave you children, in effect he said, ‘take these children, and nurse them for me ;’ and to him you must be accountable for your conduct towards them. If you neglect their religious education, what will you say in your defence in the day of judgment? Can you plead, that they were nothing to you---that it devolved on others to care for their souls---that more important

concerns engaged your attention---or that you were ignorant of your duty? You cannot, no, you cannot! You must be aware also, that the future prosperity of your family depends on how you manage it now. You have it in your power, under the divine blessing, to make your children wise, and virtuous, and happy,---and will you not endeavour to do it?

If care in guiding their infant steps into the paths of righteousness; if affording them religious instruction adapted to their age; if even a seasonable frown, or a suitable smile, would be the means of preserving your children from profligacy, from the gallows, and from hell, (which, by the blessing of God, might be the case); would you not guide them, would you not instruct them, would you not frown, or smile, or do any thing to accomplish ends so desirable? Why, then, are not these things attended to? Why do so many parents break the sabbath themselves, and teach their children to do the same?

(3.) *In the chamber of sickness.*---There are many evils resulting from sabbath-breaking, which are not immediate, but which are sure to follow in due time. Men in health, and at

ease, like those who turn the wrong end of the telescope to their eye, fancy every evil diminutive and distant, and suppose it unworthy of attention, or, at least, not serious enough to excite their concern. But soon the object is discovered not only great, but at hand, and excites a dread, not before apprehended. Such are many evils that follow the profanation of the Lord's day. For example: 'a man on the sabbath-day engages in some laborious exercise, and, by this method, overheats his blood: this is followed by a cold, the cold by a consumption, and the consumption by death. Another, by feasting or gambling on this day, dissipates his property, and is reduced to poverty: poverty is attended by disease, and sickness by premature dissolution. Now what was the primary cause of death?---and to its primary cause it must be ascribed;---was it not violating the Lord's day?

Enquire of the sick, what laid the foundation of their sickness? and you will hear many a one ascribe it to breaking the sabbath. Visit the hospital, go from ward to ward, and solicit information respecting the origin of the complicated diseases you may witness; and you will frequently hear them ascribed to a similar

cause. Some, through one Sunday vice, and some through another, are reduced to the weakest state, and to the lowest ebb of life, and present you with perfect spectacles of human woe.

As a confirmation of what we have said, or as a comment on the doctrine advanced, hear the following quotations from Dr. Beard's Theatre of Divine Judgments :---' At a place called Tidworth, on the sabbath-day, many being met together at foot-ball in the church-yard, one had his leg broken, which presently mortified, and of which, shortly after, he died. At Aulcester, in Warwickshire, upon the coming forth of the Declaration of Sports, a lusty young woman went, on the sabbath-day, on the green, where she said she would dance as long as she could stand; but while she was dancing, she was smitten with a violent disease, whereof, within two or three days after, she died.'

Alas! how foolish the hearts, and how vain the attempts of those who smile at the notion of a righteous and vindictive providence, and fight against God to manifest their prowess, and to amuse their fellows! ' He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have

them in derision.' Find a person, if you are able, who hath hardened himself against God, and hath prospered. Look among the sage in transgression, and the mighty in sin, and try to discover a man who has found the ways of error to be pleasant, and the paths of iniquity to be paths of peace,---and you would seek through eternity in vain. 'In the midst of their laughter there is sadness,' and the end of their folly is disappointment and death.

Nor suppose, that because God is slow to anger, he will never be angry. The longer the clouds are gathering, the heavier will the rain descend. The sky that was blackening a hundred and twenty years, deluged the world.---Awful is the condition of that man who lives long in a state of open transgression unchastised! His sin, grown grey with age,---gigantic with nursing---monstrously deformed---terribly armed, and flaming for vengeance, shall presently pursue him 'through every lane of life,' and thrust him into the tomb and the bottomless pit at a single blow. Crime, like the young adder, destroys its parent.---Ah, ye that on this holy day revel in unholy joy! suffer us to say as Moses, the man of God, has said before, 'be sure your sin will find you out.' 'Hear and

fear, and turn unto the Lord :’ observe his sabbath, attend his sanctuary, worship God, obey his word, and ‘ sin shall have no dominion over you.’

(4.) *In numerous disasters.*---‘ There are,’ writes the venerable author of the Village Sermons, ‘ ten times more accidents on the Lord’s day, than on any other days.’ With him we most cordially agree. For though it may be objected, that accidents may occur on the sabbath, as well as on any other day; yet, we reply, that most of the accidents which happen in the week-days are unavoidable, and arise from fulfilling those engagements which circumstances make lawful and necessary; but the accidents which happen on the sabbath might be avoided, since they arise from pursuing those ways which are unlawful, and performing those actions which are unnecessary; and by which means any calamity is amply merited; and we look with indignation on human misery so impiously invoked.

But to give you a specimen: ‘ some time ago,’ writes Dr. Beard, ‘ when a number of people were assembled together in Paris Gardens, to witness a bear-baiting, the scaffold,

on which many of them were standing, suddenly broke down, and scores of people fell headlong to the ground; eight were killed on the spot, and many more were so injured, that their days were considerably shortened.'

'A similar catastrophe,' says the same author, 'happened at Risley, in Bedfordshire, where a great number of people met together in a chamber to see a play, when the floor giving way, several of them fell down and expired immediately, and many others were severely wounded.'

Finally, Dr. Twiss records, 'that as fourteen young men in the winter, on the Lord's day, were playing at foot-ball upon the ice, on the river Trent, near to Gainsborough, all meeting together in a scuffle, the ice suddenly broke, and every one of them sunk like lead, and perished in the water, no more to profane the sabbath of the Lord.'*

* 'A melancholy accident occurred on the river Thames a few Sundays since. Eleven persons, all married men, engaged in a boat of the wherry kind. The wind, which had been very high, becoming more moderate in sea-reach, they made fast the main-sail to the side of the boat, soon after which a sudden gust of wind upset the wherry, and six of the unfortunate men were drowned. Most of the deceased have left *large families*.' *Evang. Mag.* vol. xx. p. 351. Vide also vol. xiii. p. 238.

These are three disasters out of multitudes that might have been mentioned. But, ah! could you fancy half the horrors which even these presented! See the people in Paris Gardens revelling in unbounded folly, and raising their impious curses to the skies! But mark them, when they hear the scaffold crack! Behold their laughter turned suddenly to sadness; see their hands extended in despair; see scores of them covered with blood and wounds; see their bones and brains strewed on the ground; hear the piercing cries, the dying groans; see the last struggles; see, ah, could you have seen their frantic spirits when driven from their shattered habitation!---what spectres! how they sought, but sought in vain, to hide themselves from their incensed Creator!

Visit the play-chamber at Risley. The people are crowded in a room on the Lord's day; but for what purpose? To see an exhibition of a dying Saviour; to hear 'the truth as it is in Christ;' to feel 'his love shed abroad in their hearts;' to form resolutions of piety; to pray for a divine blessing; to celebrate the divine goodness? Ah! no! no! to see, and hear, and feel, what would almost disgust the foulest demon, perhaps tacitly to resolve continued

rebellion against God; to sing the song of the drunkard; and, indirectly, to imprecate divine vengeance on themselves, and all their neighbours! And now witness their end; sudden and dreadful:---‘they die, they waste away; yea, they give up the ghost, and where are they?’

Lastly, behold those fourteen young men perish in the Trent! Here are the admired, the beautiful youths, the flower of their families, and the hope of their friends.---Here one moment they glide, and every bosom bounds with delight, and the next are sunk into an awful eternity! Fancy their fond parents and relatives, with wringing hands and breaking hearts, run up and down the river’s bank, to find the cold remains of their unfortunate friends! see them carry home the lifeless clay; imagine the domestic misery; then attend the funeral solemnities; and, after all this, tell us candidly, if you think sabbath-breaking productive of any real or enduring happiness.

(5.) *In singular judgments.*---That there were temporal judgments inflicted under the patriarchal and jewish dispensations, the deluge of the world, the destruction of Sodom, the plagues of Egypt, the curse on Cain, the fate

of Er, and the leprosy of Gehazi, fully assure us. That there have been temporal judgments under the gospel dispensation, may be proved by referring to the end of Judas, the fate of Ananias and his wife, the death of Herod, and the blindness of Elymas. That there have been judgments since the apostolic age, the best of men have supposed. And that there are judgments in the present day, we can see no reason for doubting. But whether this or that particular providence be an express visitation from God, for any particular sin, it becomes not us, at least, incautiously to determine. By most present, the following occurrences will be considered divine judgments. However, we shall not contend with those who may be disposed to think differently. We shall mention---

First, JUDGMENTS ON INDIVIDUALS.---

‘ And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day: and they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation; and they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done unto him. And the Lord said unto Moses, the man shall surely

be put to death ; and all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died, as the Lord commanded Moses.^c

Mr. Clarke tells us of a godly minister, ‘ who was one day preaching against the profanation of the sabbath, and happening to mention the circumstance of the Israelite just recited, one of the congregation rose up and mocked him, and then hastened out of the church to try the experiment ; but, alas ! it failed ; for he was soon after found dead, with a bundle of sticks under his arm.’

He informs us also, ‘ that at Burton-upon-Trent, a preacher taking occasion to reprove the people for breaking the sabbath, and particularly for the common practice of selling and buying meat on the Lord’s day morning, when a tailor, out of bravado, walked through the town with both his hands full ; but the poor fellow was arrested in his march, for he suddenly fell down, and expired in the open street.’

Mr. Bailey gives an account of a woman, ‘ who was accustomed to follow her business,

^c Numbers xv. 32—36.

namely, dressing of flax, on the Lord's day. It happened, however, on a certain sabbath, that sparks of fire appeared to issue from the flax, but which did no injury. On the next Lord's day the flax actually took fire, but was presently extinguished. But, not taking warning by this, on the ensuing Sunday it caught fire again, consumed the house, and so burnt the woman that she died on the following day.'

Lastly, 'A number of people in Bedfordshire,' as Dr. Twiss relates, 'having agreed on a match at foot-ball on the Lord's day; two men went into the belfry to call the people together by tolling the bell. While they were there, some persons, sitting in the church porch, heard a dreadful peal of thunder, and saw flames of fire approaching through a dark lane, and which flashed horribly in their faces; it then passed into the belfry, killed the man tolling the bell, and so injured the other, that he survived but a very little while.'

Secondly, JUDGMENTS ON COMMUNITIES.*---We refer you to Jerusalem. 'Thus

* 'Heaven marks our vices with offended eyes,
And lifts its rod to humble or chastise ;

saith the Lord, and it shall come to pass, that if ye will not hearken to me to hallow the sabbath day; and not to bear a burden, entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.^d Such is the prediction; hear its accomplishment:---‘ Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, and burnt the house of the Lord, and the king’s house, and all the houses of the great men burnt he with fire.’^e You have seen the calamity; attend to the cause of it:---‘ What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? did not your fathers thus, and did not our God [for this iniquity] bring all this evil upon us and upon this city?’

Fierce blow his winds, and lo! contending waves,
 Plunge ships, and wealth, and men to wat’ry graves.
 He speaks, and pestilence, at silent night,
 Steals to the couch, and breathes a mortal blight.
 Destruction walks abroad, and smites his prey,
 Unseen, uncheck’d, amidst the blaze of day.’

AGE OF FRIVOLITY.

^d Jeremiah xvii. 27.

^e Ibid lii. 12, 13.

We refer you to Edinburgh and London.---
 ‘In Edinburgh,’ writes Mr. Willison, ‘where sabbath-breaking very much abounded, the fairest and stateliest of its buildings in the Parliament Close and about it, were, on a certain Lord’s day morning, burnt down, and laid in ashes and ruins, in the space of a few hours; to the astonishment and terror of the sorrowful inhabitants.’ He observes also, ‘that this vice reigned grievously in London; and on one Sunday morning a fire broke out, which burned so furiously for three successive days, that the greatest part of the city, with many beautiful churches and public buildings, were totally destroyed.’^f

We refer you to Tiverton, in Devonshire.---
 Dr. Beard tells us, ‘that a godly minister having frequently forewarned the people of this place, that unless they reformed their manners on the sabbath, God would bring some signal judgment upon the town; but to which they paid no regard; it actually took place: for a little after the minister’s death, a fire broke out, and a man might have seen a hundred houses all at once on fire; and above

^f Willison on the Lord’s Day

fifty persons were consumed in the flames. This admonition proving ineffectual, another fire soon after consumed the whole town, except thirty poor dwelling-houses, a school-room, and a few alms-houses.'

No person, who believes in the superintendence of God in the world, will feel at a loss to account for these calamities, though produced apparently by second causes. And here what a field for reflection arises in our view! Had you been present at the stoning of the Israelite; had you first found the impious wretch that copied his example: had you seen the tailor drop dead in the street; had you witnessed the flax-dresser devoured in the self-enkindled flames; or had you beheld the lightning consuming the man in the belfry in Bedfordshire; trembling and astonished, you would have exclaimed, 'surely profaning the sabbath is a great offence to God, and a dreadful evil to mankind!'

Nor would you have been less instructed and alarmed, had you seen the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the people; the conflagration in Edinburgh and in London; and the double visitation of vengeance on the inhabitants of Tiverton. Believing them

from God, and for the violation of this sacred day, you would have raised your hands toward heaven, and implored for yourselves, your neighbours, and the country at large, a spirit of holiness, and a serious concern for the sanctification of the christian sabbath.

(6.) *In the culprit's confession.*---A simple violation of the sabbath, under the law, was to be punished with death. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak thou unto the children of Israel, saying, verily my sabbaths shall ye keep; for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among the people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.'^g

Now, though we should not feel warranted in

^g Exodus xxxi. 12--15.

adhering to the letter of the ceremonial law, yet we very much regret that our discipline on the sabbath is so lax, and that so few are chastised for the violation of those laws of our country, which are founded on the fourth commandment, and which enjoin a due observance of this holy day. Yet, we remark, that, notwithstanding men are seldom punished for this crime immediately, they are frequently punished for it remotely. For instance: a person on the sabbath contracts a habit of doing mischief, and this habit is the occasion of enormous crimes in the week, for which, in due season, he is brought to condign correction; hence, sabbath-breaking is deservedly punished among his other acts of iniquity: and we feel convinced, that as the Lord's day shall be more or less observed, our prisons will be more or less occupied, and executions more or less frequent. This sentiment will be confirmed by the following confessions:---

Thomas Savage, a youth of about sixteen years of age, executed at Ratcliffe, confessed, at the place of execution, that the first sin he began with, was sabbath-breaking.

Thomas Hollands, executed at Southwark for the murder of his wife, confessed, that,

among other things, sabbath-breaking, and the neglect of prayer and public worship, had brought him to that untimely end.

Margaret Clark, executed at Surry, declared, that breaking the sabbath, and neglecting her duty towards God, had been the cause of bringing her into that condition: and, when on the gallows, she admonished the people in the following words: ‘ I desire you all not to spend the Lord’s day idly; for it was sabbath-breaking that was my first step to this wretchedness.’

John Moores, twenty-two years of age, executed at Chester for burglary, when on the gallows, addressed the spectators to the following effect: ‘ My friends, you are come to see a man die. I would advise you to take warning by me. The first beginning of my ruin was sabbath-breaking: it led me into bad company; and from bad company, to robbing gardens and orchards; and from gardens and orchards, to house-breaking; and that has brought me to this place. Many of you are young; and I, in an especial manner, warn you to beware of sabbath-breaking.’

Lastly, Mr. Smythys, formerly curate of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London, relating the

confession of a condemned prisoner, says, ‘ that it was the *prisoner’s* earnest desire, that all young men, especially, should take care not to mispend the Lord’s day. And I do not know,’ adds the curate, ‘ that ever I observed repentance in a condemned malefactor, who did not bitterly lament the neglect of his duty to God on this day.’^h

Oh! ye fathers and mothers, ye masters and mistresses, ye guardians and guides of the rising generation! we feel incapable of expressing our sentiments respecting your office and your responsibility; and therefore again appeal to your judgment and to your heart. To you is the fourth commandment particularly addressed, because on you its observance particularly depends. Had the parents, masters, or guardians of the unhappy creatures, whose dying confessions you have heard, but curbed their licentious charge when restraint was possible; these victims of vice might have lived as blessings to society, and, in a good old age, might have died in the bosom of the church, and as encouraging patterns of piety to their neigh-

^h Vide Turner on Providence, Part 1. chap. cvii.

bours and friends. Be watchful, therefore, over your rising families.

And to the youthful part of this audience we most affectionately say, beware of what some call little sins! The commencement of sin, like the beginning of strife, is ‘as when one letteth out water:’ first, the dam oozes drop and drop, then a very little stream, then a larger, then a torrent, and then stop it if you can. Little did these culprits think, when they were first making free with the Lord’s day, that their little venial follies, as many term them, were almost inseparably connected with robbery, with murder, and with death! The youthful sabbath-breaker should be shunned as a ripening assassin, and pitied as a criminal in his way to the gallows!

(7.) *In the regions of misery.*---After the declaration of our Saviour, that for not duly improving our talents, or for not feeding, clothing, and visiting poor saints, men are to be consigned to remediless woe; surely no one will pronounce us harsh in saying, that men may be sent to hell for breaking the fourth commandment. Indeed the nature of this sin is such, that, if persisted in, to the end of your lives,

it will *necessarily* exclude you from happiness: for how can they arrive at heaven, who never walk but in a contrary direction! Sabbath-breaking is a parent evil, it engenders almost every other; it is, in fact, a despising of the only means which God has provided to effectuate man's salvation: it is a sin which, if practised till death (and to-morrow we may die,) will hurl headlong its ignorant victims into that sea of wrath, which is ever raging to devour the ungodly and the sinner, and which is so strikingly described in the sacred volume.

Hear, then, ye men of pleasure, ye profaners of God's holy day! hear of the horrors that await you, when ye shall not have a sabbath to desecrate to acts of sinful pleasure, or savage impiety! In addition to a privation of heaven with all its blessedness, hell is represented, 'as a place whereon the Lord shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest---as a devouring fire, and everlasting burnings---as a land of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth---as an everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels---as a station where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched---as a region beyond

the bounds of mercy, and where even a drop of water cannot be obtained to cool the burning tongue---as a punishing with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power---as a land of blackness and darkness for ever---as a pit whence the smoke of the sinner's torment ascendeth up for ever and ever---and as a lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'ⁱ Such is your place, and such your endless portion, O ye thoughtless souls, who violate the christian sabbath!

In the midst of your youth and the pleasures of life, you may contemn such old-fashioned tales, and fancy them framed by greedy parsons to gain a livelihood, or by angry nurses to frighten their children into a good humour; but remember, that the evil day is coming; a day, 'when the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, shall be darkened; when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men bow themselves; when the

ⁱ Psalm xi. 6. Isaiah xxxiii. 14. Matt. viii. 12. xxv. 41. Mark. ix. 44. Luke xvi. 24, 25. 2 Thess. i. 9. Jude 13. Rev. xiv. 11. xxi. 8.

grinders shall cease, and those that look out of the windows be darkened; when the doors shall be shut in the streets, and the sound of the grinding be low; when ye shall rise at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; when the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper be a burden; when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl shall be broken; when the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern.^k

Then, O ye deluded souls, will you call for mercy; and, dreadful to think, may call in vain! then, like many a despiser of the gospel, will you fear a hell, which now you consider only a figment of a distracted fancy; then will you seek to enter into heaven; yet, alas! may not be able; but will hear a voice, full of majestic terror, saying unto you, ‘because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproofs: I, also, will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction

^k Ecc. xii. 2—7.

cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you ; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me ; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord : they would none of my counsel ; they despised all my reproof : therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.’¹

‘ Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this ; that they would consider their latter end !’^m Oh, that sabbath-breakers would consider what gracious opportunities they are neglecting, what present and future happiness they are losing, and what dreadful condemnation they are meriting, by their sabbath-impiety ! Such a reflection, under the divine blessing, might produce the most salutary and lasting advantages. It might soften the callous heart, reform the immoral conduct, and, at length, lead the sinner to the throne of grace, to the refuge for afflicted souls, and, finally, to heaven itself. ‘ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy

¹ Prov. i. 24—31. ^m Deut. xxxii. 29.

upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'ⁿ Amen.

HYMN.

'Thee, Lord of sabbath ! we would praise,
In concert with the blest ;
Who, joyful in harmonious lays,
Employ an endless rest.

On this glad day a brighter scene
Of glory was display'd
By Christ, the eternal word, than when
The universe was made.

Alone, the dreadful race he ran---
Alone, the wine-press trod :
He died and suffered as a man,
But rises as a God !

He rises, who our pardon bought,
With grief and pain extreme :
'Twas great to speak our souls from night---
'Twas greater to redeem.

A bless'd eternity we hope
With him in heaven to spend ;
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And sabbaths never end.'

ANON.

ⁿ Isaiah xlv. 7.

LECTURE VII.



MEANS AND MOTIVES FOR BETTER OBSERVING THE LORD'S DAY.

WHILE we look indignant at sin, and weep over the sinner, at the same time the most pleasing emotions, and the warmest affections, are excited in our minds, when we see the great and the good stepping forward, exerting their energies and influence to arrest the progress of impiety, and to promote the prevalence and dominion of virtue. On this principle, what man of God can read of the pious zeal, the dauntless courage, and the constant care, of the prince of Judah, in reforming the abuses of the sabbath day; and not revere the man, admire his motives, and feel ambitious to copy so good and so illustrious an example!

As a ruler he is not secluded in his palace all the year long; nor does he view the affairs of the nation with the eyes of his ministers. Amidst the bustle of a court, the confusion of

a new settlement, and the labours of repairing the desolated city ; he goes about the town on the sabbath day, and examines what is onward. When he sees the day profaned by ordinary business, he passes not by with unconcern, but immediately reprimands even the nobles of the nation, and charges them with the commission of those sins, at which they had been wickedly conniving. Neither does he suffer the evil to drop here, nor will he leave it with inferior officers to enforce the law. He commands the gates to be shut early on the preceding evening ; and because he suspects the fidelity of the common porters, he puts some of his own well-tried servants in their places, to prevent any traffic on the holy day. After this he proceeds into the suburbs, and finding the merchants trading without the walls of the city, he summons his authority, and declares, ‘ that if they do so again, he will severely punish them for it.’ And, to make all his efforts more effective, he commands the Levites to watch the gates of the city, that nothing of the kind might be tolerated for the time to come. And, finally, he concludes the business with a fervent prayer to God, to pardon the sins connected with his most holy services,

Would to God, that our rulers and all ranks of men, as far as circumstances permitted, would copy this good man's example! Nehemiah, for this single instance of piety, (had it been the only virtuous action of his life upon record,) will be remembered as long as the sabbath shall be called a delight by the people of God. While the brave warrior, the deep politician, and the sage philosopher, of antient years, are sunk in oblivion, or live only in marble unobserved, or in pages unperused, this man shall live in the hearts of the wise and good. 'Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever the gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall this, also, that this man hath done, be told for a memorial of him.' For, as the scripture declares, 'the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance; but the name of the wicked shall rot.' The honours obtained by deeds of heroism, or by acts of impiety, are like the crowns of the Grecian conquerors, which, in a few hours, faded upon the hero's brow.---We now proceed to consider---

IV. And lastly, THE MEANS AND MOTIVES FOR BETTER OBSERVING THE LORD'S DAY.

And,

FIRST, THE MEANS.---In order, then, properly to sanctify the sabbath for the future---

(1.) *It requires you to observe it better yourselves.* And to simplify the subject, we will address you---

*First, AS INDIVIDUALS; to whom, as such, we say, you must repent of the past.**

* Though in a former discourse we insisted on the necessity of spiritual mindedness on the Lord's day, yet we cannot prevail on ourselves to omit inserting the following passage, on the same subject, extracted from Dr. Dwight's System of Divinity; a work well worthy the attention of every biblical student. 'All who read the gospel know, or may know, perfectly, that sin may be as easily and as extensively committed in thought, as in word or action; and that the real seat of sin is in the heart. With the reformation of our hearts, then, we are always to begin our duty. We may as easily and as grossly profane the sabbath, as far as ourselves are concerned, by thoughts which are unsuited to its nature, as we can by any actions whatever. If our minds are intent on our business or our pleasures; if our affections wander after them; if we are cold or luke-warm with respect to our religious duties; if we are negligent of a serious and cordial attention to them; if we regard with impatience the interruption occasioned to our secular concerns; if we wish the institution had not been appointed, or the time in which it is kept lessened; then, plainly, we do not esteem the sabbath a delight, nor abstain from finding our own pleasure. So long as this is the state of our thoughts, all our outward conformity to this precept (for such is really the nature of the text, Isaiah lviii. 13, 14,) will be merely hypocritical. Every oblation from such a mind will be

Let every man who desires to observe the Lord's day better for the time to come, commence by sincerely repenting of his past profanation of it. There will be little reformation without genuine repentance. No man will be very strenuous in pulling down that, the erection of which has cost him little compunction of mind; while, on the other hand, no person can easily rush to the fresh commission of those crimes, over which he has been recently sorrowing. To inspire your hearts with grief, reflect that the best part of your time has been so badly employed, as to have been rendered a curse to you, instead of a blessing. And if this consideration prove ineffectual, direct your cries to him, 'who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, as well as the forgiveness of sins.'

You must resolve to amend.---Repentance alone will not be sufficient. You must come

vain, and all its incense an abomination. The sabbaths, and the callings of assemblies, among persons who act in this manner, will be such as God cannot away with, and their solemn meetings will be iniquity.' vol. iv. p. 56.

to a holy resolution to alter your lives. Multitudes are sorry for their past improprieties; but then they seldom resolve to avoid them for the time to come. And while the devil can keep them parleying with their follies, he will have little trouble in making them plod onward in their old track of transgressing. Stand up like men, therefore, and resolve like christians, to keep the sabbath of the Lord, and to reverence his sanctuary. Determine to abandon your former companions; to relinquish every bad practice; to fight against every depraved principle within you; and to live at all times, especially on the Lord's day, in the service of God, and in seeking that favour which is better than life.

You must pray for assistance.---Repentance and resolution will do little without divine assistance. Our tears are soon dry, and our resolutions are easily broken. Go, therefore to the strong for strength. Pray to be made mighty for the arduous work by God's almighty power. Seek to be properly equipped for your spiritual conflict from the well-stored armory of heaven. Apply to the captain of salvation to lead you forth in triumph over your spiritual

enemies. Aided by the Saviour, you must succeed : whereas your going to battle without him, will be imitating the infatuated Israelites, who, without their leader or his command, ran to the hill-top, and were cut down by the Canaanites of the land.

You must begin to reform.---Prayers are valuable only as they lead to practice. How many people may be found that now and then weep over their follies, feebly resolve to reform, and sometimes pray for divine assistance, who never commence a holy course of living! They are still procrastinating the work itself. Some trifle or other is ever coming in the way. They have such an engagement next Lord's day; and after that they purpose to be better. The next sabbath arrives, and solicits their regard; but they are again engaged, and are still deferring the commencement of a better life. Thus many spend sabbath after sabbath, resolving to amend without the least amendment. Now we seriously urge you to begin a new life immediately. The past sabbath is in eternity, the ensuing one is in eternity; this only can be called your own. And while it is called 'to-day,' harden not your hearts against

allowed, we should have been distressed by unceasing perplexity. Happy is it for us that an ordinance of this nature cannot be found in scripture.'^a

You must observe it solemnly.---Consider what you this day commemorate---the creation of the world, and the redemption of mankind. Could you have seen the stupendous operations of Deity in the creation, of which we are every sabbath reminded; or could you have seen the Son of God moving on in his awful career to save a ruined people, of the completion of which this day is a dear memorial, you would have been serious indeed. Consider also, before whom you are now assembled---'before God,' before the Creator of all things, the Lord of nature, and the King of saints; be ye therefore filled with holy awe, and bow before him with profound humility. Consider, likewise, for what purpose you are come into this place; not to spend an idle hour, nor to gratify a mean desire, but to obtain that mercy, without which you must perish for ever; and by obtaining which you will be eternally and infi-

^a Dr. Dwight.

nately happy. May you, on the sabbath and in the sanctuary, feel like Jacob, when he exclaimed, ‘how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!’

You must observe it gratefully.---‘All the benevolent things which God has done for us, this day brings before our eyes. Our being, our daily blessings, our redemption, our salvation, the resumed character of holiness, the title to endless life, the final escape from sin and misery, this heavenly season proclaims with an unceasing voice. At this season, God comes down to dwell among men, divested, with respect to all who are willing to receive him, of the awful frowns of an offended judge, clothed with the smiles of an eternal benefactor, and adorned with the unceasing titles of the Father, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of man. Here the calls to gratitude are all united; the blessings of earth and heaven, of time and eternity, here invite us to love and praise the author of all our mercies. Can we fail to render to him according to his benefits? Can we fail this day to ascribe ‘blessing, and honour, and glory, and power

to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!'^b

You must observe it joyfully.---While on this blessed day, and in this sacred place, a holy awe should pervade our hearts, and suppress every feeling of unhallowed lightness, still there is a serious pleasure and a solemn joy, well becoming the sabbath and the sanctuary; and which are naturally inspired when we meet together to worship a covenant God. On this day our blessed Redeemer finished the work of our redemption, and entered into his rest: on this day the Holy Spirit has brought tens of thousands from the mazes of ignorance and the regions of death, into the paths of righteousness and the land of life. On this day we have been the recipients of great and innumerable blessings. And while we are now associated in divine service, we are uniting 'with the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven;' with them we pray, with them we sing, with them we preach, and hear the word of God:---

^b Dr. Dwight.

how pleasing the thought! how well calculated to make us 'joyful in this house of prayer!'

You must observe it as in the sight of God.---Nothing is more calculated to arouse our stupidity, to inflame our feelings, or to solemnize our souls, than the idea, that God sees every action, hears every word, and reads every thought; and who, that believes his existence, will deny his omniscience?

*
 O happy souls that pray
 Where God appoints to hear!
 O happy men that pay
 Their constant service there!
 They praise thee still;
 And happy they
 That love the way
 To Zion's hill.

To spend one sacred day
 Where God and saints abide,
 Affords diviner joy,
 Than thousand days beside.
 Where God resorts,
 I love it more,
 To keep the door,
 Than shine in courts.'

WATTS.

‘ His all-surrounding sight surveys
Our rising and our rest !
Our public walks, our private ways,
And secrets of our breast.’

Under a proper impression of a present Deity, you must be serious ; conscious that your Judge is at hand, you must be holy ; and sensible of a Saviour near, you must be happy. Strive, then, to observe the Lord's day, as under the Lord's immediate notice ; and you will spend it much better than you have done hitherto. Let the language of Hagar be deeply engraven on your hearts, and be present to your recollection every moment of this hallowed day, ‘ thou, God, seest me ;’ and it will do more for you towards sanctifying the sabbath, than a thousand powerful arguments, enforced by as many grievous penalties and delightful promises.

We will address you—

Secondly, AS HEADS OF FAMILIES:---To whom we say---Give your inmates a good example. How can you expect your children to sanctify the sabbath, if they do not see it sanctified at home ? You may command them

to be very religious on this day, but their inquisitive minds will ask you the reason. You may answer, ‘because God commands it;’ yet they will quickly rejoin, ‘and does he not command you also?’ You may observe, ‘that keeping it will be for their advantage;’ but they will again enquire, ‘will it not be the same for you?’ To which you must be silent. And when they hear you commanding them to do what you neglect, but which they conceive equally incumbent on both, they will naturally conclude, either, ‘that there are no such commands nor advantages, or that you yourselves do not feel their influence. Similar reasons will be formed by your other domestics; who will probably suppose that if they hallow the Lord’s day as well as their master or friend, no more can be required of them.

Make your children and servants join in religious duties.---Call them, from the oldest to the youngest, around the family altar; question them about the things of God and salvation, and endeavour to implant in the infant heart the seeds of truth and righteousness. Take all of them, if convenient, to some place of public worship, as often in the day as

possible. Endeavour, also, to make religion look lovely, and to render the exercises of this day more pleasant than those of any other. By these means, under the blessing of God, your family in a little time, without your authority or interference, will probably engage, of their own accord, in the services of religion.

Early instruct your children in the nature and importance of the sabbath.---You may easily induce them, while young, to observe this day by your example and authority. But if you do not inform them of the principles on which this institution is grounded, and the vast advantage of holding that institution as sacred and divine, they are not likely to observe it from reasonable conviction, nor at all, when tempted to neglect its observance. Begin, then, in the nursery; explain the subject clearly, and impress it sweetly on the infant mind; and you will make impressions which neither time nor temptation can properly eradicate: however difficult may be the task which we impose, we feel that we are enjoining nothing too hard for maternal attachment to achieve.^c

^c *Vide* Gen. xviii. 17—19.

Examine your young people respecting the improvement they make in religious knowledge.---Seek to discover how far they are advanced in the knowledge of divine truth. Be anxious for them to grow in grace as well as in stature. Make it a practice also, on your return from a place of worship, to require from them some good written or verbal account of the services on which they have attended; by these means they will be kept from being inattentive hearers, and also from looking about the place, which are too commonly the practice; and it would keep them quiet, and make them learn the word of God, as well as hear it.

Encourage no needless visiting.---And here, by quoting an anecdote, we will shew you how to get rid of your intruding and unwelcome visitors. ‘A good old religious farmer, being vexed and tormented every Lord’s day, with people who paid him visits on worldly business, took the following method to keep them away: every sabbath he placed himself at the head of the servants’ table in the kitchen, and opened his bible, or some other good book, and constantly read aloud; by which means, his former visitors passed by his door, remarking,

that they would have stepped in, had it not been, that the old man was always brawling at his book!"^d In a word, 'let this be a sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.'

Thirdly, AS GOOD MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.
 To whom we say---*Invite your friends and neighbours to the house of God.*---Why are so many places of worship so thinly attended? You reply, perhaps, 'because the people do not like the *minister*. This may be one reason; but the chief reason is, they do not like the usual *hearers*. It may be said, the pure doctrines of the cross are unpalatable to the multitude; but, we answer, the multitude does not distinguish truth from error, and, therefore, cannot be disgusted with these doctrines more than with others. Besides, are there not many poor preachers, whose sentiments are most repugnant to our depraved nature, surrounded by overflowing audiences? What, then, is the reason for such thin congregations? Among others, the want of zeal in soliciting your neighbours to accompany you to the house of God, is not the least.

^d Evang. Mag.

In proportion to the piety or wickedness of the professed friends of any christian society ; as they appear affectionate or unfriendly one towards another ; according to the diligence or remissness which they manifest in bringing others into the circle of their religious exercise ; and as they treat them, either kindly or coarsely, when there ; so will such society, in a great measure, prosper, or be unsuccessful. Be ye, then, zealous for the Lord of hosts.---Come not alone to the sanctuary, if company can be procured by your holy living, your kind demeanour, or your strenuous exertions to obtain it.

Encourage sabbath schools for the young.--- Already our streets and lanes, formerly crowded with noisy children, during school-time, are almost without a child. Those little creatures, instead of running about cursing and swearing, and doing all the mischief in their power, are now sitting at the feet of kind and pious people, who teach them the way to happiness and to heaven. These institutions, which are supported at a very small expence, have done incalculable good already ; and, if they are conducted with wisdom, and continued with vigour, will be a greater means of moralizing the world, and,

consequently, of sanctifying the sabbath, than any other method, preaching excepted.*

Support all godly institutions.---There is not a religious institution, of the divine appointment or approval, which, if properly conducted, will not tend materially to sanctify the Lord's day. Every society that has the spread of divine truth for its object, will certainly diffuse a multitude of motives for its regular observance. This doctrine is so interwoven with the principles of the bible, that nothing can more effectually secure its regard, than the propagation of revealed religion. Let the friends of the Saviour, then, be forward in every good word

* 'The land is groaning 'neath the guilt of blood,
Spilt wantonly: for every death-doom'd man,
Who, in his boy-hood, has been left untaught
That wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace, unjustly dies.
But, ah! how many are thus left untaught—
How many would be left, but for the band
United to keep holy to the Lord
A portion of his day, by teaching those
Whom Jesus lov'd with forth-stretch'd hand to bless!
Behold yon motley train, by two and two,
Each with a bible 'neath its little arm,
Approach, well pleased, as if they went to play,
The dome where simple lore is learn'd unbought.'

and work of this nature, by which means the people, through the grace of God, will be brought to keep the sabbath of the Lord, and reverence his sanctuary.

Shew a marked dislike to sabbath-breakers.--- How common is it for believers to treat the avowed enemies of God as if they most cordially sanctioned their iniquitous practices! If any one injure your earthly father or friend, you feel the injury yourself, and as such resent it; but when your father and friend which are in heaven are insulted, you look on with a criminal indifference! Do you not often prefer the sabbath-breaker as a servant, a tradesman, or a friend, to the conscientious follower of Christ, and observer of his holy day? And do you not thus suppress righteousness, and promote iniquity?---We are persuaded, that to mention your fault, is to make you feel it.

But now to correct your error.---Be advised then, never to take into your service, any one who openly and habitually profanes the Lord's day. Never buy goods of any person in the week, who makes a practice of selling on a Sunday; and never make him your familiar friend, who is unfriendly to a strict observance

of God's holy day. If all christians were to adopt this practice, and persevere in it, they would soon discover the good effects of their proceedings.*

Fourthly, AS EMPLOYERS. --- After what has been said in the course of these lectures, it would be superfluous to contend, that all ordinary business should be suspended on the sabbath day; that employers, so far from encouraging, should not even tolerate their servants to do their usual labour; and that they should exercise their influence and authority in sanctifying that day, of which they themselves are too often the principal profaners.

And here we remark, that the Lord's day can never be duly observed by the labouring poor, unless many employers alter the time for paying them their wages. As we formerly remarked, it is too prevailing a custom throughout the kingdom, for masters to settle with their workmen, either on the Sunday morning, or, at best, on Saturday night, and then frequently late, and at the ale-house.---Then follow the

* ' Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.' Ps. x. 1. 6.

evils which we formerly exposed. Now, upon the ground even of common justice, we entreat you to pay your servants, either on Friday evenings, or, at the latest, on Saturday morning; by which means the women will have the money to expend, and time to do all they need before the sabbath day; which will terminate, at least, the necessity of breaking it.^e Surely it can be of no consequence to either master or man, whether the week be considered as ending on a Friday evening, or on the Saturday night.

That such a regulation might be easily effected, there can be little doubt. If the clergyman, esquire, or any respectable person in a town or parish, were merely to mention the subject, the farmers and master-tradesmen would very probably adopt it without the least hesitation. The proposed alteration was effected in a parish in the south, merely by a minister's speaking a few words on the business.

(2.) *It requires the joint interference of all christians.---Let them countenance no sabbath impiety.---*If all the people in our country, who profess to be true christians, and, consequently,

^e Vide Evang. Mag. vol. xxviii. p. 186.

to sanctify the Lord's day, were to set their faces against every violation of it, (from the greatness of their numbers, and the respectability of their rank,) they would constrain this hideous monster, sabbath impiety, to hide its head behind the sable curtains of shame and confusion for ever.

But, alas! so far from striving to look vice out of countenance, do we not find many, from whom we expected better things, conforming to this world, and breaking the sabbath in their own religious way? Do they not fill our coaches, throng our shops, and crowd our places of public amusement? And does not this give countenance to the ungodly? Are they not encouraged by it? Let us observe and improve by a hint, which the writer of our text has elsewhere given us: 'if the people of the land bring ware, or any kind of victuals, on the sabbath to sell, let us not buy it of them, on the sabbath, or on the holy day.'

Let them petition parliament for a reformation in the discipline of Sunday morals.---
We often read of petitions presented to the ruling magistrates for the abolition of bad laws, the enforcement of the good, and the con-

struction of new ones, in reference to subjects of a local, and sometimes of a trifling nature, which are graciously heard, and cheerfully answered. We think, therefore, that if the friends of religion at large were also to draw up and present to parliament a petition for the abolition of any old laws, that may not be altogether suitable to christian liberty; the emendation of some, the penalties of which are too small; the formation of others, which might be deemed requisite; or, at least, for a better enforcement of those already enacted, as they regard the sanctification of the sabbath; their prayers also would be graciously heard, and as cheerfully answered: and we should have reason to expect, that in a very little time, there would be a general reformation of morals on the sabbath of the Lord.*

* The pious reader may reply—what you here recommend has been repeatedly attempted, but in vain. I know that it has; and I know, also, the duty of the religious public; they should try it again and again, and persevere till their end be accomplished. Be like the importunate mother mentioned in the gospel, let repeated denials be converted into arguments, and the indifference of our magistrates stimulate your earnestness in attaining your end. Vide *Evangelical Mag.* vol. xxviii. p. 282.

Let them form societies for the suppression of Sunday vice.---If in every city, town, and village, the pious and respectable part of the people were to unite together to enforce the laws against all manner of vice, and especially against that of sabbath-breaking, the results would be incalculably beneficial. Many such societies have long existed, and are still becoming more numerous in our larger towns. The simple design of such an institution is, 'to extend the happiness and comforts of the poor, by checking their destructive excesses.' In such societies all denominations of christians could unite; and thereby aid the civil magistrates to execute, with greater effect, the laws of the land. And, by forming themselves into a respectable association, much importance would be given to their proceedings; and no individual would be stigmatised as a common informer.

These societies may be railed at by the ignorant and immoral, who either know not the duty of Englishmen, or who fear being brought to condign punishment by their interference; but they must be looked upon with respect, and obtain the best wishes of the wise and good, who see their beneficial

tendency, and who wish well to their fellow-creatures. ‘ If it be our security and honour to have laws, can it be infamous that we should endeavour to have them to good purpose?--- ‘ Such societies,’ says a noble lord, ‘ are not only legal, but highly meritorious. They are for the preservation, and not for the destruction of civil and religious liberty.’

Let them pray to God for his gracious interference.--- Every effort to sanctify the Lord’s day, should be followed by our most ardent supplications at a throne of grace. And if our circumstances be such that we can do no more, yet this is doing a great deal; and we have reason to hope that, in answer to our prayers, the Lord, for the sake of his church, for the sake of his Son, for the sake of his own glory, will, by some means or other, bring about a general reformation of human morals, until ‘ the sabbath shall be called a delight, and the holy of the Lord, honourable.’

(3.) *It requires the example of the ruler and the rich.*---OF THE RULER.---Little good will be done by any rigour of the law, unless the magistrates themselves observe it; unless they

be examples of what they are to approve in others. ‘ Those that make laws for others, and are to see to the execution of them, (says archbishop Tillotson,) ought to be strict observers of them themselves: for it must needs put a man not a little out of countenance to be severe upon those faults in others, of which he knows himself to be notoriously guilty. And yet how many are there, whose place and duty it is to correct the vices and immoralities of others, who are far from being examples! And, therefore, it is no wonder that there is so^o lame and unequal a distribution of justice in our nation; and that magistrates are so cold and slack in the discountenance of vice and impiety, and in putting the good and wholesome laws made against them into execution.’

OF THE RICH.---Nor is the example of the magistrate all that is required. There must be the example of the great in general: the lower orders copy the manners and dress of the higher, and they will try to imitate their morals too. And, as bishop Horsley, speaking of the profanation of the sabbath, observes: ‘ these scandals call loudly for redress; but redress will be in vain expected from any

increasing severity of the laws, without the concurrence and willing example of the great. This is one of the many instances of corrupt fashion in the higher orders of society, which render all law weak and ineffectual. I am not without hope, that the example of the great will not be wanting; and when once the duties of religion shall be recommended by the general example of superior ranks, then, and not till then, the bridle of legal restraint will act with effect upon vulgar profligacy.*

(4.) *It requires the prompt exertions of the clergy.---Let them preach much against sabbath-breaking.---*It has been generally found, that vices have prevailed or declined in proportion to the earnestness or indifference with which the preacher has regarded them in his pulpit exercises. And we feel persuaded, that if all the preachers of the gospel were to attack this monster with a holy boldness, and wield

* 'Some men move in a high sphere, and can give laws to those below; their very examples, their smiles, or frowns, are laws, and can do more to the reforming of the world, than the wisest instructions, the most convincing arguments, and the most pathetic exhortations of meaner men.'—DR. SHERLOCK.

with dexterity the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; he would soon expire under their pious hands.

Let them also open sabbath evening lectures in all towns and populous villages.---This practice would lessen the crowds of people that fill our streets on Sunday evenings. And it would be found almost invariably the case, that our churches and chapels would be better filled, that the people would be more attentive, and the preacher more animated, at this season than during any part of the day besides. But, to convince you of the beneficial tendency of such institutions, we will repeat to you the words of a respectable writer, who appears well acquainted with the subject.

‘Numbers of persons, women with young families, and servants of various descriptions, cannot attend public worship more than once in a day, if there be no evening service: numbers, also, in large towns, work late on the Saturday nights, and make themselves amends by sleeping late on Sunday mornings; thus almost always the morning service, and frequently that of the afternoon also, is sacrificed. It is easy to say, that this is men’s own

fault; but that does not remedy the evil. The business of the ministers of Christ, like that of their divine master, 'is to seek and to save the lost:' and if their churches were open in the evening, many of these lost sinners would be induced to enter them; and some, no doubt, would be brought to sanctify the Lord's day in a manner different from what they had done.

'Again, it is also grievous to add, many of the poor are so meanly clothed, that they will not be seen in the church in the day time; and, yet [in the winter season] will steal in to hear an evening sermon. This is the only time when such persons can be met with; and not few of them have, by means of such opportunities, been brought to repentance unto salvation. Finally, in many places, apprentices and servants, having been kept in during the former part of the day, are released from restraint on the Sunday evening, and employ it too commonly in corrupting themselves and others. Infinite mischief is thus produced; not a little of which would be prevented, or counteracted, by an evening service.'

Before we close the present lecture, allow us to read you the following papers, containing information perfectly relevant to the subject we have now been discussing.

I.

A copy of a hand-bill recently circulated in a respectable town in Lancashire, for promoting a better observance of the Lord's day.

*' Borough and Township of Garstang, in the county of Lancaster.---*Whereas, the illegal and indecorous practices of keeping open shops and public-houses, and of riotous and tumultuous assembling of boys in the streets on the sabbath-day, prevail in this town and borough, to the dishonour of God, reproach of religion, and the subversion of decency and good order: and frequent complaints having been made to us respecting such illegal and improper practices---

' We, the undersigned, therefore, consider it our duty, to caution all shop-keepers and innkeepers within this town and borough, against selling goods, ale, or spirituous liquors ;

and also, boys and others against indulging in unlawful and tumultuous assemblies and exercises (and particularly during divine service) on the Lord's day: and we do hereby give notice, that if such practices are obstinately persisted in and continued after this public caution and notice, that proper steps, by prosecution or otherwise, will be taken to punish the offenders as the law in such case directs.

P. B. *Bailiff.*

T. B. *High Constable.*

W. W. *Minister.*

T. R. *Chapel-warden.*'

II.

Resolutions formed at a meeting for promoting a due observance of the Lord's day, and recommended to the clergy of the diocese of London, by the late learned, pious, and venerable bishop Porteus :

' At a general meeting of the inhabitants of the town and castle of Windsor, held at the Guildhall, on Tuesday, the 20th day of April, 1808, for the purpose of adopting

such resolutions as should be thought most effectual for promoting a better observance of the sabbath in this town and neighbourhood: J. EGELSTONE, Esq. Mayor, in the chair.

‘ RESOLVED,---That the practice of opening shops, or otherwise exercising trades or callings on Sundays, the delivery of goods by the common carriers, and the admission of persons into public houses, and suffering tipping therein, during divine service, are gross breaches of the sabbath, and tend greatly to the corruption of morals, and the increase of dissipation.

‘ RESOLVED,---That the persons present at this meeting do hereby pledge themselves to discountenance such practices, and that they will not apply or send to any shop whatsoever for goods, provisions, or any other article, on Sunday, nor suffer their servants, or any of their respective families so to do; and they do recommend to the inhabitants generally, to conform to this resolution.

‘ RESOLVED,---That this meeting do recommend to the several trades-people of this town and neighbourhood, to keep their shops close shut during the whole day of every Sunday, (excepting where it may be unavoidably

necessary for light, and in that case to remove all appearance of exposing goods for sale from the windows,) and not to sell any thing, except in cases of absolute necessity, nor to permit the carriers to deliver goods at their respective houses, during the day.

‘ **RESOLVED**,---That it be recommended to all persons who employ workmen, labourers, and others, weekly, to pay all such their wages in sufficient time to preclude the necessity of their purchasing provisions, or other necessaries, on a Sunday.

RESOLVED,---That these resolutions be signed, and copies thereof be printed, together with extracts from the several acts of parliament, relative to the due observance of the Lord’s day, and circulated throughout this town and neighbourhood.

RESOLVED,---That the thanks of this meeting be given to the mayor.^m

III.

An extract of a letter from a gentleman of Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, to a friend in London; shewing the success of pious en-

^m Evang. Mag. vol. xvii. p. 130.

deavours to promote the sanctification of the Lord's day:---

‘ I am happy to remark, also, that the cause of morality, and, I hope, of real experimental godliness, is on the advance in Trowbridge. You will be pleased to hear that the sabbath is observed in this town much better than it used to be, and better than it is, at present, in many neighbouring places. Our worthy magistrate, E. H. Mortimer, Esq. has employed his authority for the suppression of vice on the Lord's day, and the consequences are very beneficial.

‘ All public-houses are shut up, not merely as in many places, while the people are in the church, but during the whole day, and one cannot get even a pint of beer for any money, unless in cases of extreme necessity, and then not without an order from the magistrate, or some person duly appointed to grant it. A traveller may be served with beer, but he can obtain only a single pint. As a result, we see no drunkards in our streets, nor hear any tumultuous noise in public-houses: and the inn-keepers, instead of being deprived of attending the ordinances of religion, are seen in the house of God as other people.

‘ Neither is there a shop of any kind opened on the Lord’s day, where you can purchase any thing for almost any money. Such is the activity of our worthy magistrate, that he has his eyes in every place ; and such is his zeal for the observance of the sabbath, that few people can openly break it with impunity. In fact, the people, knowing that nothing can be bought on the Sunday, make a point of getting in all they want on a Saturday ; and, therefore, feel no necessity for going to the shop on the sabbath.

‘ I should notice too, that there is no hair-dressing nor shaving here on a Sunday. All the hair-dressers have entered into a written agreement, that no one shall shave or dress any person on the sabbath under a considerable penalty. And, if any one presumes to violate the agreement, by dressing or shaving, the rest are obliged, by the same bond, to prosecute him for it to the utmost severity of the law. The consequence is, as you may expect, no person asks to be dressed or shaved, because he knows such solicitation would be useless. And if you were to see our good people at church on the Lord’s day, you would not say that they looked the worse for not employing

the barber or hair-dresser to polish their chin or to trim their head in the morning before they go out !

‘ I am, yours, &c.’

HYMN.

‘ Great God ! this sacred day of thine,
Demands our soul's collected powers ;
May we employ, in works divine,
These solemn, these devoted hours.
O may our souls, adoring, own
The grace that calls us to thy throne !

The word of life, dispens'd to-day,
Invites us to a heavenly feast ;
May every ear the call obey,
Be every heart a humble guest.
O bid the wretched sons of need,
The soul reviving promise plead !

Thy spirit's powerful aid impart,
O may thy word, with life divine,
Engage the ear and warm the heart,
Then shall the day, indeed, be thine ;
Then shall our souls, adoring, own
The grace which calls us to thy throne.’

. DODDRIDGE.

LECTURE VIII.



THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IN bringing the present course of lectures to a close, it may be useful to remind you, that the scope of our former discourses has been to explain the nature of the christian sabbath, and to enforce on our audience its proper and constant observance. In this concluding address, we propose to amplify some of our former arguments for sanctifying the Lord's day, and to add such new incitements as have hitherto been necessarily omitted.

If, therefore, the motives already brought forward have been insufficient to induce you religiously to observe this day, we hope that those which we are about to submit to your serious and candid consideration, will have the desired effect. May the Lord so impress his blessed word upon your hearts, that from this time you may feel its gracious influence, and

cheerfully obey its sovereign commands!---We shall notice---

SECONDLY,---THE MOTIVES FOR BETTER OBSERVING THE LORD'S DAY.---As the good example of other men has a great influence in regulating our conduct, we propose (in addition to what we have said of a similar nature) to enforce a proper sanctification of the sabbath,

(1.) FROM THE FEELING OF EMULATION.---From the example, *First, of individuals*---Let us contemplate the conduct of *Lord Harrington*. It is said of this young nobleman, 'that though he was of elevated rank, and frequently attended the court, he did not allow those things to lessen his reverence for divine institutions. His calling often occasioned his being far from any place where the gospel was preached, but he overcame these difficulties, by travelling every Lord's day several miles to enjoy it. He was a most attentive hearer of the word. He knew that he was in the presence of God, who is no respecter of persons; that he heard not the word of man, but of his Maker, and he willingly laid all his honours at the Saviour's feet. Immediately after sermon, he

retired from the company of his best friends for half an hour, to meditate on what he had heard, and to apply the truth to his own soul: and his attention to the spiritual interests of his domestics, was hardly exceeded by that which he paid to himself.'

Of Queen Mary.---This princess was very exemplary in her conduct on the sabbath. As a proof, it is recorded, 'that when she was at the Hague, a vessel was stranded on the Saturday evening, which multitudes went to see, and which she also wished to have seen. But to some who solicited her to go, she said, she thought it too late that night, and she supposed it would be shivered to pieces by Monday morning; 'yet, I am resolved,' she added, 'not to give so ill an example as to see it on the Lord's day.'^a

Of King George the Third. 'When the king was repairing his palace at Kew, one of the workmen, a pious character, was particularly noticed by his majesty, who often held conversations with him on serious subjects. One

^a Howe's Funeral Sermon for the Queen.

Monday morning the king went as usual to watch the progress of the work, and not seeing this man in his customary place, he enquired the reason of his absence. He was, at first, answered evasively by the workmen. At last, however, upon being more strictly interrogated, they acknowledged, that not having been able to complete a particular job on the Saturday night, they had returned to finish it on the Sunday morning, which this man refusing to do, had been dismissed from the employment. 'Send for him back immediately,' said the king; the man who refuses doing his ordinary work on the Lord's day is the man *for me.*'^b

Secondly, Of the clergy---THE ANTIEN
CLERGY.---In the year 307, a council of divines assembled at *Illiberis*, a town in Spain, ordained, 'that if any man dwelling in a city should keep from public worship three Lord's days together, [without good and sufficient reason,] he should be suspended from the communion of the church.'

About the year 772, a synod of bishops, met at *Dingofolinum*, ordained as follows: 'let

^b Anecdotes of King George III.

every man abstain from profane employments, and be intent on God's worship. If any man shall work his cart on this day, or do any such common business, his team shall be presently forfeited to the public use; and if the party persists in his folly, let him be sold for a bondman.'

'We forbid,' says a council, held at *Arles*, in 813, 'public markets, civil disputes, and pleadings on the Lord's day; as also husbandry, and all manner of work, except such as is proper for the day, and becoming divine worship.'

A synod, held at *Tours*, in the year 1583, 'prohibited, under pain of excommunication to the offender, all rioting, public feasts, dancing, morrices, hunting and hawking, sales of wine or victuals at inns or cook-shops, (except to strangers and travellers,) all prizes and other plays, all stage-plays, comedies, and all other irreligious spectacles of the like nature, on the christian sabbath.'^c

THE MODERN CLERGY.---And here we shall content ourselves with relating the following

^c Vide Morer on the Lord's Day, Dial. 3.

account of the late reverend Mr. Grimshaw. 'He was,' says Mr. Newton, 'very earnest and persevering in enforcing a due observance of the Lord's day. At church, in prayer time, if he observed any careless behaviour, he would often stop, rebuke the offender, and not proceed till he saw the whole congregation upon their knees.

'It was his frequent and almost constant custom to leave the church while the psalm before sermon was singing, to see if any were absent from worship, and idling their time in the church-yard, the street, or the ale-houses; and many of those whom he so found, he would drive into the church before him.

'A friend of mine,' continues the biographer, 'passing a public-house in Haworth, on a Lord's day morning, saw several persons making their escape out of it; some jumping out of the lower windows, and some over a low wall. He was at first alarmed, fearing the house was on fire; but, upon enquiring what was the cause of the commotion, he was told, that they saw the parson coming.'^d

^d Newton's Life of Grimshaw, p. 92.

Thirdly, Of the multitude.---It was sanctified---

By the Bohemians. --- Comoenius tells us, ' that the Bohemians sanctified the Lord's day in the following manner: first, by cessation. Every Saturday evening before sun-set, all desisted from external labours, and with the evening begun the day sacred to God. On the sabbath, they rested from all outward labours and negotiations, that their servants and beasts might have breathing time. They abstained from the works of the flesh; such as drinking, dancing, dice, idle-walkings, and triflings; as also from nuptial feasts, fairs, and markets. Secondly, by employment. They engaged in divine and spiritual things; such as singing psalms, and reading the scriptures. They also frequented the assemblies, not only once or twice, but four or five times; and endeavoured to forget things temporal, that they might learn to meditate on things eternal.'^e

By our forefathers.---' In the troublesome times of Charles the First, though the dis-

^e Turner on Divine Providence.

cipline of the church was at an end, there was, nevertheless, an uncommon spirit of devotion among the people in the parliament quarters. The Lord's day was observed with remarkable strictness, the churches being crowded with numerous and attentive hearers three or four times in the day. The officers of the peace patrolled the streets, and shut up all public-houses. There was no travelling on the road, or walking in the fields, except in cases of absolute necessity. Religious exercises were set up in private families; as reading the scriptures, family prayer, repeating sermons, and singing psalms; which was so universal, that you might have walked through the city of London, on the evening of the Lord's day, without seeing an idle person, or hearing any thing but the voice of prayer or praise from churches and private families.'^f

By the Otaheitans.---' When Mr. Crook and his family arrived on the coast of Otaheite, in the brig Active, they were much surprised

^f Neale's History of the Puritans.

that not a single native could be seen all along the shore as the vessel sailed; nor could they perceive any smoke arising from their dwellings. This excited, in the minds of Mr. Crook and others, a painful suspicion, that the island had been subdued, and all the inhabitants cut off in the wars. In the midst of this agitation of mind, one of the sailors, an Otaheitan, who left Port Jackson in the *Active*, observed, that the natives were keeping the sabbath-day: that of late they did no kind of work, nor cooked any victuals, nor went out of their houses, except to worship God; and that the whole of the day was employed in religious worship, or in teaching one another to read. At length the vessel came to anchor, in Matavia Bay, and not a native made his appearance until Monday morning, when great numbers repaired to the brig, bringing with them the usual testimonies of hospitality; thus fully satisfying all on board, that they had been observing the sabbath, as before expressed.^g

Indeed, the heathens themselves kept their sacred seasons with a degree of solemnity, that

should put some christian people to the blush. 'The Athenians were accustomed to amerce, and severely to correct, all those who, on their holy days, came not to the sacred assemblies. Moreover, they hurdled up the streets, to prevent the people from going to any place but the ecclesia; and they took away all the saleable goods from those who, at this season, exposed them for sale.'^h

(2.) FROM A SPIRIT OF LOYALTY.---
 'Deplorable, without doubt,' says bishop Watson, 'is the condition of that country, in which the manners of the people have got the ascendancy over its laws; in which the fashion of the world tyrannizes over the religion of Christ. And is there not great reason to believe, that such is the condition of this country at this time? The law prohibits gaming at any time for high stakes; our manners permit it on a Sunday, even to any extent. The law suffers no sabbath to be profaned by the necessary pursuits of ordinary occupations; our manners, stimulated by

^h The learned Trapp on the text.

commercial avarice, suffer mail coaches, stage coaches, and other means of conveying goods and passengers, to be as free on this day as on any other in the week.'

But, to be a little more particular, we observe,

First, That a sabbath-breaker openly violates the laws of his country.---Though the laws of the land, respecting the sabbath, may be somewhat defective, yet who among you observe them as they require you? They command you, without good reason to the contrary, to go to some place of worship every sabbath-day; but are there not some present who stay away for many succeeding sabbaths, without even a semblance of necessity? The laws prohibit buying and selling any thing on this day (save mackerel and milk, before nine in the morning, and after four in the afternoon); but are not many of your shops open all the day long, and do not many of you purchase goods on this day, contrary to the laws of your country? No carriage, cart, cattle, or any thing of the kind, is allowed to travel on the sabbath, except in urgent cases; but do we not see this law violated every

Lord's day? According to law, no sports or pastimes are to be tolerated; but look around on the sabbath! Where, then, is British patriotism? where is your subjection to the higher powers? where is your boasted loyalty? Persons that break the sabbath, by neglecting to attend some place of worship, by selling goods, by needless labour, or by seeking forbidden pleasure, are as really rebels against their country's laws, as the fierce banditti, clothed with terror, and spreading desolation whithersoever they go; and if right took place, they would be always punished, if not so severely, yet quite as justly.

*Secondly, A sabbath-breaker renders himself exceedingly contemptible in the eyes of every sensible christian.---*He contemns both God and man: he despises the most favourable government in the world: he is a rebel against the constitution of the country: he ruins himself, and aids in ruining his neighbours: yet how little is sabbath impiety laid to heart by the majority of christian professors! How seldom do we hear it lamented! Men break the laws of God and of man in violating the

Lord's day, and are still the wise and good, and in every way respectable, members of society! Curses are poured out upon the abettors of false doctrines; and those are treated with disdain, who do not believe exactly as their superiors; while the volatile or avaricious sabbath-breaker is respected, kept in the bosom of our churches, and courted as the friend of God and the country! What! are not men to be known by their works now as well as formerly? And is there not heresy in practice, as well as in principle; in duty, as much as in doctrine? Is not the bad doer worse than the bad thinker? It was a saying of the Jews, 'that he who lives in a place where a synagogue is, and will not go to it, must be accounted a very ill neighbour.' Let us discriminate as christians; and consider that man who breaks the sabbath as contemptible, and as deserving our pity and prayers, as he that disbelieves the veracity of the bible, or breaks any other part of the decalogue.

(3.) FROM A REGARD TO YOUR TEMPORAL INTERESTS.---*A due observance of the*

*sabbath will be advantageous to the nation;**
as may be gathered,

First, FROM THE PROMISES OF GOD.---

‘ And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of the city, on the sabbath-day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains,

* ‘ The fear of God is the principal support of government, and of the peace and good order of the world. The more godliness there is among us, the more honesty, industry, and sobriety, there will be. Nothing but *religious* principles will restrain men from secret wickedness, control the licentiousness of the great, who think themselves above law, and curb the wild passions of the people. And, as there is no probability that religion will ever flourish, or even subsist, among us without sanctifying the Lord's day, it is very desirable it should be sanctified for the good of the country; that we may become a sober, virtuous nation, and that God may not be provoked to give us a prey to our enemies.’—ORTON, p. 236.

and from the south, bringing burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the Lord.'ⁱ

Also, 'if thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thine own pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places upon the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.'^k What could more beautifully represent national prosperity, than the above passages? and what could more plainly tell us, that it chiefly depends on the sanctification of the sabbath?

Secondly, FROM THE INSTRUCTIONS DELIVERED ON IT; which are every way calculated to meliorate the condition of the world. Does honesty tend to the welfare of mankind? this the duties of the sabbath promote: 'thou shalt not steal.' Would industry

ⁱ Jer. xvii. 24—26.

^k Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

diminish the number of our paupers? this it urges: 'Be diligent in business.' Is female purity desirable? this is inculcated: 'let your young women be chaste.' Is kindness advantageous? the duties of the Lord's day lead us, 'to love our neighbour as ourselves.' Will loyalty add to our national weal? this, too, is promoted: 'Put them in mind to be subject to magistrates.'

'Speak,' said Paul to Titus, 'speak the things that become sound doctrine, that the aged men be vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women, likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holy women; not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. That they may also teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands; that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise, exhort to be sober minded. Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour

in all things.' Were such doctrines always preached, and always practised, how would our country advance in peace, in affluence, and in lasting glory!

It will be advantageous to the more restricted circles of society.---The happy renovation which our towns and villages would experience by a proper observance of the sabbath is inconceivable. There is something in attending the house of God, and in social piety, that is every way calculated to improve the public mind. 'In a place of worship,' says Dean Paley, 'so many pathetic affections are awakened by every exercise of social devotion, that most men, I believe, carry away from public worship a better temper towards the rest of mankind, than they brought with them.'---Sprung from the same extraction, preparing together for the period of all worldly distinctions, reminded of their mutual infirmities and common dependency, imploring and receiving support and supplies from the same great source of power and bounty; having all one interest to secure; one Lord, one judgment, the superior object of all their hopes and fears to look towards; it is hardly possible, in this

position, to behold mankind as strangers, competitors, or enemies, or not to regard them as children of the same family, assembled before their common parent; and with a portion of the tenderness that belongs to the most endearing of our domestic relations.

‘It is not to be expected that any single effect of this kind should be considerable or lasting; but the frequent return of such sentiments, as the presence of a devout congregation naturally suggests, will gradually melt down the ruggedness of many unkind passions, and may generate in time a permanent and productive benevolence. If ever the poor man holds up his head, it is at church; and if ever the rich man views him with respect, it is there: and both will be better, and the public more profited the oftener they meet in a situation, in which the consciousness of dignity is tempered and mitigated, and the spirit of the other erected and confirmed.’¹

It will be advantageous to individuals.---IT WILL BE SO TO THE GREAT AND THE LEARNED.---‘I have found,’ says lord chief

¹ Vide also Dr. Dwight's System of Divinity, vol. iv. p. 76.

justice *Hale*, ‘by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing of the Lord’s day has ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week thus begun has been blessed and prosperous to me. And, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week has been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my success through the week, by the manner of my passing this day.’

And the learned *Boerhaave* was accustomed to say, ‘that none of his schemes ever succeeded to his wish, if he did not conscientiously devote the sabbath to the service of God.’

IT WILL BE THIS TO THE WORKING CLASSES OF SOCIETY.---Let not the labouring man suppose, that this institution infringes on his domestic comfort, by preventing his earning another day’s wages. The very contrary is the case. If men wrought all the seven days, they would get no more for it than they do now for six. ‘For in countries tolerably advanced in population and the arts of civil life, there is always enough of human labour, and to spare. The difficulty is not so much to procure, as to

employ it. The addition of the seventh day's labour to that of the other six, would have no other effect than to reduce the price. The labourer, who would deserve most from the change, would gain nothing at all.'

As an elucidation of this sentiment, allow us to digress for a few moments, and relate the following beautiful anecdote. 'In the city of Bath, during the last century, lived a barber, who made a practice of following his ordinary occupation on the Lord's day. As he was pursuing his morning's employment, he happened to look into some place of worship, just as the minister was giving out his text, 'remember the sabbath day to keep it holy : ' (Ex. xx. 8.) He listened long enough to be convinced that he was constantly breaking the laws of God and man, by shaving and dressing his customers on Sunday. He became uneasy, and went with a heavy heart to his Sunday task. At length he took courage, and opened his mind to the minister, who advised him to give up Sunday dressing, and worship God. He replied, beggary would be the consequence ; he had a flourishing trade, but it would almost all be lost. At length, after many a sleepless night spent in weeping and praying, he was determined to cast all his

care upon God, as the more he reflected, the more his duty became apparent.

‘ He discontinued Sunday dressing, went constantly and early to the public services of religion, and soon enjoyed that self-gratulation which is one of the rewards of doing our duty, and that peace of God, which the world can neither give nor take away. The consequences he foresaw actually followed. His genteel customers left him, as he was nick-named a puritan or methodist. He was obliged to give up his fashionable shop; and in the course of years became so reduced, as to take a cellar under the old market-house, and shave the common people.

‘ One Saturday evening, between light and dark, a stranger from one of the coaches, asking for a barber, was directed by the ostler to the cellar opposite. Coming in hastily, he requested to be shaved quickly, while they changed horses, *as he did not like to violate the sabbath*. This was touching the barber on a tender chord: he burst into tears, asked the stranger to lend him a halfpenny to buy him a candle, as it was not light enough to shave him with safety. He did so, revolving in his mind the extreme of poverty to which the poor man must be reduced.

When shaved, he said, 'there must be something extraordinary in your history, which I have not now time to hear. Here is half-a-crown for you; when I return, I will call and investigate your case. What is your name?'

'William Reed,' said the astonished barber.

'William Reed!' echoed the stranger: 'William Reed! by your dialect you are from the west?'

'Yes, sir; from Kingston, near Taunton.'

'William Reed, from Kingston, near Taunton! What was your father's name?'

'Thomas.'

'Had he any brother?'

'Yes, sir, one, after whom I was named; but he went to the Indies, and, as we never heard from him, we suppose him to be dead.'

'Come along, follow me,' said the stranger; 'I am going to see a person, who says his name is William Reed, of Kingston, near Taunton. Come and confront him. If you prove to be indeed him, whom you say you are, I have glorious news for you: your uncle is dead, and has left an immense fortune, which I will put you into possession of when all legal doubts are removed.'

They went by the coach, saw the pretended

William Reed, and proved him to be an impostor. The stranger, who was a pious attorney, was soon legally satisfied of the barber's identity, and told him that he had advertised him in vain. Providence had now thrown him in his way in a most extraordinary manner, and he had much pleasure in transferring a great many thousand pounds to a worthy man, the rightful heir of the property.

Thus was man's extremity God's opportunity. Had the poor barber possessed one halfpenny, or even had credit for a candle, he might have remained unknown for years; but he trusted God, who never said, 'seek ye my face in vain.'^m But to return to our subject.

IT WILL BE THIS TO THE MOST DESPISED OF THE PEOPLE.---' For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls, a place and a name, better than of sons and daughters : I will

^m Stephenson's Nature and Importance of the Christian Sabbath, p. 48. See also an interesting anecdote in the Bapt. Mag. vol. vii. p. 198.

give them an everlasting name, which shall not be cut off. Also, the sons of the stranger, that join themselves unto the Lord, and serve him, and love the name of the Lord to be his servants; every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.'^a

(4.) *From reasons purely spiritual.*---We urge upon you to sanctify the sabbath,

From the nature of the fourth commandment.---The manner in which this commandment was delivered, the place it holds in the decalogue, and the extra arguments by which it is enforced, are peculiarly imperative on us to observe it properly. This, in common with the other commandments, was written twice with the finger of God---it was given from Sinai, amidst thunder and lightnings, in the hearing of all Israel---and it was considered by Nehemiah, a special blessing bestowed upon mankind: 'thou camest down and didst renew

^a Isaiah lvi. 2, 4-7.

unto them thy holy sabbaths.'---It is placed in the first table, and at the climax of it.---The manner of its composition, also, is equally remarkable: it is enforced by arguments both positive and negative---and there are more of these than we find attached to any other commandment.

From the reasonableness of the institution.---God gives us all our time, and all the blessings of life, and is, therefore, entitled to our warmest acknowledgments. But these cannot be properly expressed, without setting apart certain stated times for that purpose.

Observe, again, that God has required but a small portion of our time for himself. He might have reasonably demanded every other day, but he has not; he requires only a seventh part of our time, and surely this ought not to be denied him.

How easy, also, are our religious duties, compared with those of his antient people? They had festival upon festival, some of them very expensive; journey upon journey, some of them very laborious, in their religious worship; but, under the new testament dispensation, we are commanded to keep only the first day of

the week: and to deny him that would betray the most base ingratitude.

From its being the best time we have to prepare for heaven.---This is the day that the Lord has made, on which man should particularly attend to the concerns of his soul. Now the Saviour waiteth to be gracious; to support us by his power, to guide us by his counsel, and to enrich us with his bounty. 'Now, therefore, is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.' And if you do not attend to the concerns of your soul on this day, when will you do it? Will you convert the days of labour into religious rest; when you convert the sabbath into a day of labour, or of sinful recreation? This would be very culpable, were you religious enough to do it. But such a case is improbable. We do not often see the sabbath-breaker at his devotions in the week. No! and will you not think of religion at all? for desecrating the Lord's day is but another name for neglecting it altogether. Are your souls of no value to you? Will you never think about a day of judgment? Are you never dreading the wrath to come, nor seeking an interest in a crucified

Saviour? Are you willing to be lost for ever? If so, go on: you cannot ensure your damnation better, than by breaking the sabbath-day!

From the vanity and shortness of your lives.--- When you take a retrospect of what you have done, how many broken sabbaths and neglected ordinances stare you in the face, and condemn your abominable conduct? You have not carefully embraced the one, nor diligently improved the other. Some of you have spent your Sundays in idleness; others of you in criminal pleasure; and many of you in worldly employments. And what do you say now? Will you add to the number of your crimes? Will you still keep the old beaten track, and knowingly rush headlong to ruin!

Consider, also, that this may be your last Lord's day; and that your relatives may convey you to the house appointed for all living before the next arrives. Improve it, then, before it flies for ever; and if providence kindly afford you a few more sabbaths, seek to redeem your lost time by being more diligent in the means of grace. Besides, if you should live

for many years, yet you may lose your health, and not be capable of attending to your soul's concerns; you may also grow hardened in sin, or become insane, or be removed from the means of salvation; and what would be the consequence? May these thoughts awake you to redoubled diligence in seeking eternal happiness on the Lord's day.

From the honourable name which you bear.---
 The proper observance of the Lord's day is the touchstone of your christianity. Indeed, you cannot be christians without it. The sentiment which the Jews erroneously applied to Jesus, contains a very important truth; 'this man cannot be of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day.' In vain do you weep under the word on the Lord's day morning, and then return to your business or pleasure; in vain do you tell us of your delightful experience, if you can willingly violate the sabbath; you are deluded; your feelings are the effect of fanaticism, not of pure and undefiled religion. In vain do you claim the christian name, and violate one of the chief maxims of christianity. Do not tell us you are

churchmen; the institutes of that respectable body condemn you. Say not you are dissenters; sabbath-breaking is no part of dissenterism. Say the truth: 'ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do.'

From your apparent concern for the glory of God.---When shall men speak of the Father's 'glorious honour and majesty, and of his wondrous works, and of the might of his terrible acts, and declare his greatness?' when shall creation be commemorated, and providence admired, if not to-day? When shall we meditate on the Redeemer's labour, passion, and triumph over his enemies, if not to-day? When shall we contemplate the gracious work of the eternal Spirit; when shall men celebrate his miraculous descent, and his constant kindness towards his people, if not to-day? And shall the sabbath be neglected, and, as a necessary consequence, the honour of God be dispensed with or confined to the skies? No! forbid it every principle of justice, every feeling of gratitude, every sense of divine favour! Let every sentiment of our souls rise indignant against such an idea! Let us hallow the sabbath and honour the Lord!

From the defence which it is to the gospel of Christ.^o---The sabbath has often been termed the PALLADIUM of christianity. Remove the Lord's day, and then behold atheism, like the dragon, rising out of the sea of dark superstition, drawing the third part of the people in its train. Take away our sabbath; and the purity, the power, and even every particle, of our holy religion would be lost in a much less time than you may imagine. 'It is the observance of holy times, that preserves the practice of holy services. And without the frequent and regular returns of hallowed days, man would quickly forget the duty which he owes to God; and in a short time no vestige of religion would be found in the world.' Many have no opportunity of obtaining moral and religious knowledge but on the Lord's day; and were they totally to neglect the duties of the sabbath, they would be most awfully depraved. Abolish the sabbath, or suffer it to be neglected, and then begin to build new prisons, erect fresh gallows, enlarge your hospitals, extend your mad-house institutions, swear in more

^o *Vide* President Edwards on the Sabbath; and Estlin's Apology for the Sabbath, p. 13.

magistrates, and make laws against crimes of which your forefathers never dreamed. The due observance of the Lord's day is a better defence of the christian religion, and a greater obstacle to the progress of impiety, than all the criminal codes that were ever enacted.

From the pleasantness of the duty.---To ungodly men, it is true, the duties of religion do not present many attractions. They cannot see the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned. The plainest truth is to them an incomprehensible mystery, and the news of salvation, fulsome details. They turn from side to side, saying, 'how long the sermon is!' They fold their hands, and sigh, 'what a wearisome time it is; when will the sabbath be gone?' But to the people who know the joyful sound; who can see the Canaan that they love with unbeckoned eyes; who can feast upon the provisions of the gospel; to them the sabbath is truly a delight. They say, with a pious monarch, 'one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.' There the good man

sits; and, if at the threshold of the door, he envies not the wicked in his tent of ease. He says,---

‘ Go, man of pleasure, strike the lyre
Of broken sabbaths, sing the charms ;
Ours are the prophet’s car of fire,
Which bears us to a father’s arms.’

Make no frivolous objections for neglecting the sabbath, or abstaining from the means of grace.--- Many will plead the want of proper apparel: but let not that keep you from hearing the word of God. Go as you are. The salvation of your souls is of more importance to you, than the good-will of your neighbours. Besides, others will be attending to something more momentous than your apparel. However, no good person will despise you, and the bad you need not regard. Poverty is no disgrace. Lazarus is more respected than the rich man. And you will be more esteemed in your tattered clothes, than an impious noble in his costly attire.

Some may object, that many attend and are no better for it. That may be the case, and it is a case too common, but it is nothing to you. Many go, and are improved by it; and you also

may reap advantage. If others abuse their mercies, learn from their error to do otherwise. Because there is a little base coin in circulation, shall we never receive a shilling? And because a few professors of religion are not what they ought to be, shall we neglect religion altogether?

Others may say, they have attended long to no purpose. This is very doubtful; but if it be true, still go on. The man that waited eight and thirty years at the pool of Bethesda, was healed at last. The promise is, 'he that seeks shall find, and to him that knocks, the door shall be opened. Ye shall know the Lord if ye follow on to know him. He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry; therefore wait for him.' Heaven will amply repay the man who waits longest to obtain admission into it.

To conclude.---Would you see your nation prosper, and your neighbourhood happy; would you be considered loyal subjects of the realm; would you fill your respective stations with honour to yourselves, and satisfaction to those around you; would you suppress vice and profligacy, superstition and prejudice; would you have honest, careful, and active servants;

vants; do you desire your children to be followers of that which is good, to comfort you in trouble, and to support your declining age;--- then remember the sabbath-day, and keep it holy.

Would you be wise in things of the first importance; would you know yourselves, to whom you belong, and whither you are going; would you understand the purity and rigour of the divine law, how often you have broken it, and the way to escape its anathemas; would you be taught by the precepts and example of Christ, be sanctified by his Spirit; prepared for death, judgment, and eternity:---sanctify the Lord's day; for he has positively declared, 'blessed is the man that keepeth my sabbath from polluting it.'

And after all you have done, after all you have said, after all you have thought; finding no merit in yourselves, but all in the adorable Redeemer, let each one conclude in the words of the text: 'Remember me, O my God, concerning this also; and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy.' *Amen.*

HYMN.

‘Frequent the day of God returns,
To shed its quick’ning beams;
And yet how slow devotion burns,
How languid are its flames !

Increase, O Lord, our faith and hope,
And fit us to ascend,
Where th’ assemblies ne’er break up,
Where sabbaths ne’er shall end :

Where we shall breathe in heavenly air,
In heavenly lustre shine ;
Before the throne of God appear,
And feast on love divine :

Where we, in high seraphic strains,
Shall all our powers employ ;
Delighted range th’ eternal plains,
And take our fill of joy.’

ANON.

THE
SABBATH-BREAKER RECLAIMED.

FIRST DIALOGUE.

Sunday Morning.

ON a fine Sabbath-morn, in the sweet month of May,
When the hawthorn in blossom was seen ;
When perfumes fill'd the air, and all nature look'd fair,
And the fields wore a liv'ry of green :

Thomas said to his wife, the morning is fine,
Then let us walk out at our leisure ;
I have work'd all the week, recreation we'll seek,
And the fields will afford us much pleasure.

Said his wife, all our clothes are both dirty and torn,
Which will set decent people a talking ;
I shall feel much asham'd, and we both shall be blam'd
By those we may meet as we're walking.

The birds and the cattle, said Thomas, you know,
Dress all days alike, void of care ;
Let us follow their plan, be as blithe as we can,
And *not* make things worse than they are.—

They can't well be worse, for at home or abroad,
 We've nothing for dinner to-day;
 Our money's all gone, and credit we've none,
 So e'en let us do as you say.

They lock'd up their house, and their children they took,
 Unhappy at home or abroad;
 And away they all went, ('twas a sabbath misspent)
 For the chance of the fields or the road.

Not long had they walk'd, when a neighbour they met,
 And they tried his attention to shun;
 But he saw them so plain, to escape him was vain,
 And thus to discourse he begun:

Where have you been wand'ring about, Thomas Brown,
 In your jacket so out of repair?—
 A rambling I've been, o'er the meadows so green,
 And I work in the jacket I wear.

But do you not hear the church bell, Thomas Brown?
 Oh, why not the sabbath regard!—
 We a living must seek, and we work all the week:
 If we can't enjoy Sunday, 'tis hard!

But what could your work do for you, Thomas Brown,
 Were you not by your Maker befriended?—
 Why that I don't know; if to church we should go,
 Perhaps matters would not be much mended.

What I say I intend for your good, Thomas Brown,
 And your friend am desirous to be!—
 Why that I suppose, or your time you'd not lose,
 To discourse with a poor man like me.

This world is fast hastening away, Thomas Brown,
 And short are the pleasures of man:—
 Then there's no time to spare, let us drive away care,
 And merrily live while we can.

But what, when the world you shall leave, Thomas Brown,
 If your soul in dread torments should lie?—
 Why that, to be sure, would be hard to endure,
 But I cannot well help it, not I.

Yet the wretch under sentence of death, Thomas Brown,
 Would be glad for a pardon to run!—
 Why, yes, so would I, if condemned to die;
 But I know not what harm I have done.

The bible will tell you your sins, Thomas Brown,
And a Saviour will bring to your view :—
The learn'd there may look, but I can't read the book ;
It may, or it may not be true.

Hie away to the church on the hill, Thomas Brown,
For if you can't read, you can hear :—
The man with the band I shall not understand ;
The rich and the wise may go there.

The gospel is preach'd to the poor, Thomas Brown,
And would lighten your cares, do not doubt it :—
You speak like a friend, but I do not intend
To trouble myself much about it.

Could I tell you where treasure is hid, Thomas Brown,
You would spare neither labour nor pains.—
In that you are right ; I would dig day and night,
And merrily live on my gains.

But what, if you gain the whole world, Thomas Brown,
And lose your own soul, at the last ?—
My courage would cool ; I should then prove a fool,
And sorely repent of the past.

Seek in time for the kingdom of God, Thomas Brown,
 And your pleasures will never decay.—
 I feel half inclin'd to become of your mind,
 And I hope I shall do as you say.

May a merciful God give you grace, Thomas Brown,
 In his fear and his favour to dwell.—
 Your wish is most kind, I shall bear it in mind ;
 And so for the present farewell.

SECOND DIALOGUE.

Sunday Morning.

Whither go you, so clean and well clad, Mr. Brown?
 For your jacket's a new one, I see.—
 Sir, I go, with good will, to the church on the hill,
 To thank God for his goodness to me.

To hear this, it does my heart good, Mr. Brown,
 And I hope you'll continue to go.—
 This, sir, I intend ; and as you are my friend,
 You'll be pleas'd something farther to know.

When after our converse, I first went to church,
I remember'd the days of my folly ;
When I heard them at prayer, says I, God must be there,
And the place appear'd solemn and holy.

The prayers being over, then sweetly they sung ;
I felt glad that I had gone in ;
The sermon came next, and this was the text,
That death is the wages of sin.

The minister told us, that all wicked men,
Who the paths of iniquity trod,
Would be turn'd into hell, in darkness to dwell,
And all people forgetting their God.

I listen'd awhile, and felt struck with fear,
A cloud seem'd to hang o'er my head,
A tear stood in my eye, and I could not tell why,
But my heart was as heavy as lead.

On the morrow I spake upon what I had heard,
While my shop-mates were laughing and lazy,
And I should have said more, but they set up a roar,
And cried out, Tom Brown is gone crazy !

Then I laugh'd and I sung with the best of them all,
 And tried to forget what had pass'd ;
 But I thought in my mind, shall I good in this find,
 If I lose my own soul at the last ?

So again the next Sunday I went to the church,
 Though my shop-mates all join'd to upbraid ;
 For I thought, why should I fear a man that will die,
 More than Him by whom all things were made ?

The minister spake so loud and so plain,
 That the poorest might well understand :
 Repent ye, said he, and seem'd pointing at me,
 For the kingdom of God is at hand.

I felt myself vile, as he told me my sins ;
 That he knew them I could not well doubt it ;
 For it came in my head, what to you I had said,
 And I thought you had told all about it.

When I heard what my Saviour had suffer'd, I wept ;
 For he groan'd and he died on the tree ;
 But oh, the blest hour ! for the word came with power,
 And I knew that he suffer'd for me.

Thus God has dealt with me, and thus has been pleas'd
 His great goodness and grace to impart ;
 It was terror and dread that first bow'd down my head,
 But 'twas mercy that melted my heart.

Every week from my wages a sixpence I save,
 A bible to buy, for I need it ;
 And when time I can spare, to a friend I repair,
 Who has promis'd to teach me to read it.

And you, sir, have been a most kind friend to me :
 This I own, though I cannot repay ;
 But yet there is One, who this kindness will own
 At the last and the great judgment-day.

For myself, as becomes a poor weak sinful man,
 I will pray for support from on high ;
 To walk in God's ways, my Saviour to praise,
 And to trust in his grace till I die.

And though poor and unwise in the ways of this world,
 I believe in the truth of God's word ;
 That *true riches* are they, which will not pass away,
 And *true wisdom*, the fear of the Lord.

THE following is a catalogue of the principal publications on the sabbath with which the author is acquainted, and to which he refers the reader for the fullest information on this very interesting and important subject.

- Amner's Weekly Festival of the Christian Sabbath.
Ancient and Honorable Way, &c. of the Sabbath.
B. of Dorchester on the Sabbath.
Baxter on the Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day.
Bamfield on the Sabbath.
Bernard on the Sabbath.
Brabourne's Answer to Cawdry, &c.
Bromley's Way to the Sabbath of Rest.
Cawdry and Palmer's Sabbath Vindicated.
Cockin's Rural Sabbath (*verse*).
Cornthwaite's Tracts on the Seventh-Day Sabbath.
Doctrine of the Church of England concerning the Lord's Day.
Estlin's Apology for the Sabbath.
Fenner on the Sabbath.
Fleming's Plain Account of the Lord's Day.
Gibbin's Religious Observance of the Sabbath.
Gilfillin's Essay on the Lord's Day.
Grahame's Sabbath (*verse*).
Grascome's History of the Sabbath.
Heylin's History of the Sabbath.
Horne's Reflections on the Sabbath.
Hughes's Aphorisms concerning the Lord's Day.

- Ironside's Seven questions of the Sabbath
Ives's Saturday no Sabbath.
Jones's Lord's Day Proved the Seventh.
Keache's Jewish Sabbath Abrogated.
Ley's Sunday Sabbath.
Morer's Six Dialogues on the Lord's Day.
Orton's Six Discourses on the Sabbath.
Owen's Exercitations on the Lord's Day.
Palmer's Apology for the Lord's Day.
Primrose on the Sabbath.
Purkis's Essay on the Lord's Day.
Pynchon's First Ordination of the Sabbath.
Sanderson's Case of the Sabbath.
Scott on the Lord's Day.
Shepherd on the Sabbath.
Soarsby's New Testament Sabbath.
Steffe's Letter on the Christian Sabbath.
Stennett on the Sabbath.
Stephenson's Nature and Importance of the Sabbath.
Symons's Enquiry into the Design of the Sabbath.
T. C. on the Lord's Day.
Tillam on the Sabbath.
Treatise on Sanctifying the Lord's Day.
Twiss on the Christian Sabbath.
Wallis on the Christian Sabbath.
Warren on the Jewish Sabbath.
Wells's Practical Sabbatarian.
West on the Lord's Day.
White on the Sabbath.
Willison on Sanctifying the Lord's Day.
Wright on the Lord's Day.
Young concerning the Lord's Day.

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